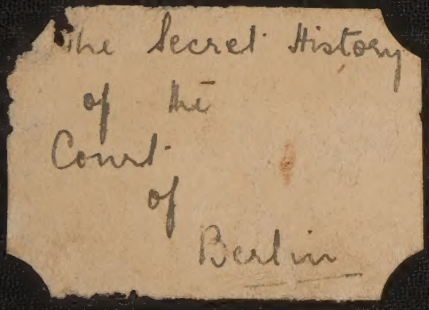
The Secret History
of the
Court
of
Berlin

152

H.B. Finch 14.4.30

THE SECRET HISTORY
OF THE
COURT OF BERLIN:

The Private Lives of William II (The Kaiser) and his Consort
From the Papers and Diaries of a Lady-in-Waiting
on Her Majesty the Empress Queen

EDITED AND ARRANGED BY
HENRY W. FISCHER

POPULAR EDITION

London
John Long, Limited
Norris Street, Haymarket

ROBERT R. MUNTZ LIBRARY
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT TYLER

First Edition, November 1904
Second Impression, December 1904
Third Impression, December 1904
Fourth Impression, April 1905
Fifth Impression, January 1906
Popular Edition, January 1909
Popular Edition (Reprint) September 1914

All rights reserved

This Edition enjoys copyright in all countries signatory to the Berne Treaty, and is not to be imported into the United States of America

INTRODUCTION

"*Vive le roi!*" croaked the imperial standard floating over the grey old Berlin Schloss when I alighted from my carriage at the Court-marshal's gate to report for duty on June 25, 1888, and "Long live the King!" breathed and echoed all the new brooms and old around me in the antechambers, in the state and in the living and servants' apartments of that immense pile. Yonder, just across the *Puppenbrücke*, at half-mast and draped in black, were seen the flags of two Queens, a widow of three and a half months the one, the other had buried the noblest of husbands but ten days before. Their palaces, which scarcely ever possessed the brazen front of right royal splendour, appeared deserted, gloomy, and melancholy beyond hope as the emblem of death wafted above them; but with us—the new masters—all was life and excitement.

I had seen royalty born, and had helped to distribute its garter on the wedding-eve; I had stood at its deathbed, and in royal company had enjoyed the good things of this world,—in fact, the greater part of my life had been spent at Court; but where formerly I was welcomed as a friend and companion, I was now—such are the vicissitudes of life—merely one of a few hundred attendants.

A lady of title and position, I had, after losing my fortune, accepted their Majesties' command to join the ranks of a retinue already noted for high-sounding names, and by royal warrant was appointed *Hofdame* to the Empress; that is, a functionary whom "the first gentleman of Europe" cleverly characterised as "making an occasional one of four large hoops in a gilded coach; a maid aiding the languor of an easy party in a royal box at the play; one that goes to the theatre, to concerts, and oratorios gratis, and has physicians without fees and medicine without chemists' bills." Was I to be that, and nothing more? The voice of Court-marshal von Liebenau, now my superior, woke me from the reverie into which I had fallen. The lord steward, at that time omnipotent, had settled upon my immediate employment. "You will for the present assume the functions of both *Maîtresse de Maison* and maid of honour," he said. "It is a ticklish post, that binds one closely to their Majesties' heels, inasmuch as the care of the all-highest persons is given into your hands, for it has already been announced that there will be no change in the intimate domestic arrangements. Kaiser and Kaiserin will continue to occupy one bed-chamber as formerly and you must superintend the body-service of both the "all-highest" master and mistress; but as your Ladyship has lived in the great world, and knows more about polite requirements than many a Princess, the aspect will not frighten you; for my part, I place implicit trust in your acumen and judgment. Later in the day, a list of special instructions will be sent to you. And now, my dear Countess," concluded the courtier, rising from his armchair, "take a bit of friendly advice

before you select your suite of rooms among the apartments set aside for her Majesty's ladies. If you want to succeed at our Court, leave all thoughts of independence, all inborn notions of truthfulness and common, every-day honesty, outside the palace gate; divest yourself of personality—all individualism save that of our masters' is odious—be an automaton pure and simple, smile upon her Majesty's whims, do not be ruffled by a superior's insults, and if at any time you must fly into a rage, retaliate upon those under you."

I was about to speak, to protest, but the Court-marshal anticipated me.

"I know what you want to say," he cried; "you think it mean and contemptible to let the innocent suffer for their betters' wrongs, and I agree with you. But we all do it, must do it; it is a sort of lightning-rod for one's ill-temper. And now, *au revoir*, Madame *la Comtesse*. Once more—be an automaton." With that *Herr* von Liebenau kissed my hand, and a minute later I stood in the court-yard quite beside myself with wrathful indignation.

. . . . . .

Nearly nine years have passed since I first cried myself to sleep in the big grey Schloss by the Spree while the hot June sun was pouring into my room and all Berlin discussed the Kaiser's first meeting with the *Reichstag;* and now that I commit to paper these memoirs of the Second William's Court, let me say that in all that period I was but used as a beast of burden by the great personages, my masters, whom Providence sent into the world "ready booted and spurred to ride,"—no better, no worse.

Special reasons for complaint I have none; neither will these pages wantonly afford umbrage to the exalted ones of whom I write, unless, indeed, they object to truth, that sentiment concerning which Dr. Johnson wrote some one hundred and fifty years ago: "There is something noble in publishing it, though it may condemn one's self."

I have no personal end in view with these papers; no excuses are offered for this narrative of Court life as I have seen it. If in part it borders on the unexpected, by upsetting established notions, and again explains certain things which have become history from a standpoint totally different from the one popularly accepted and believed, let the reader remember that truth is stranger than fiction, and that history is but a lie, to borrow a phrase from the Duchess of Orleans, the sister-in-law of Louis XV., "a smart woman, an audacious woman," the same who exclaimed, on hearing the false report that Frederick the Great was marching upon Versailles after Rossbach: "So much the better, I shall at last see a *King* then."

I shall give only such incidents of the lives of William II. and his consort as have come under my personal observation, or that I know of from reliable witnesses. The story of a very few incidents that occurred before the present Emperor's enthronisation I shall be obliged to credit to the general gossip of the palace.

THE ROYAL HOHENZOLLERNS AND THEIR KINDRED MENTIONED IN THIS VOLUME

FREDERICK I., first King of Prussia, 1701–1713. Before 1701 the Hohenzollerns were known as Prince-Electors of Brandenburg.

FREDERICK WILLIAM I., 1713–1740. Father of Frederick the Great.

FREDERICK II., the Great, 1740–1786. His best-known sister was the Margravine of Baireuth (died in 1757), authoress of the celebrated Memoirs. Frederick the Great was succeeded by his nephew:

FREDERICK WILLIAM II., 1786–1797. He was the notorious bigamist and debt-contractor. He was succeeded by his son:

FREDERICK WILLIAM III., 1797–1840. He was the husband of Queen Louise, a Princess of Strelitz (died in 1810), and the father of his successors:

FREDERICK WILLIAM IV., 1840–1861. This King became mad and died childless. A daughter of his brother William (died 1846), Princess Marie, married Maximilian II., King of Bavaria. Queen Marie (died 1889) had two sons,—Ludwig II., King of Bavaria, who died insane in 1886, and the present King Otto of Bavaria, who is also insane. Frederick William IV. was succeeded by his brother:

WILLIAM I., King, 1861–1888. Became German Emperor in 1871. The Queen and Empress of William I. was Augusta, Princess of Sachsen-Weimar, and a granddaughter (on her mother's side) of Czar Paul I., who died insane. William I. had a daughter, Louise, now Grand Duchess of Baden, and was succeeded by his son:

FREDERICK III., March–June, 1888. The Empress and Queen, styled Empress Frederick, was the eldest daughter of Queen Victoria of England, and was born in 1840. Her children are:

WILLIAM II., born 1859, Emperor and King since June, 1888; Charlotte, born 1860, Hereditary Princess of Sachsen-Meiningen; Prince Henry of Prussia, born 1862, married to Irene of Hesse, sister of the Czarina; Victoria, born 1866, Princess of Lippe; Sophie, born 1870, Crown Princess of Greece; Marguerite, born 1872, Princess Frederick

Charles of Hesse-Cassel. William II. is married to Auguste Victoria, born 1858, eldest daughter of Frederick, Duke of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Augustenburg. The couple has seven children, six boys and one girl.

PRINCE FREDERICK LEOPOLD OF PRUSSIA is the Kaiser's cousin and brother-in-law, being married to Louise Sophie, Princess of Schleswig-Holstein, sister of Empress Auguste Victoria.

THE PRINCELY HOUSES OF HOHENZOLLERN (Hohenzollern-Hechingen and Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen), whose possessions were ceded to Prussia in 1849, are, like the royal line, descended from Rudolph, *Graf* von Zollern, but, professing the Catholic faith, have not intermarried with the royal line for several centuries. Members of the royal and princely lines call each other "cousins" by courtesy.

CHARLES ANTON, Prince of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, is married to Antonie, Royal Princess of Portugal. His eldest son:

THE HEREDITARY PRINCE WILLIAM, born 1864, is married to Therese, Princess of the two Sicilies. Prince Charles Anton's second son:

FERDINAND, Crown Prince of Roumania, married Princess Marie of Edinburgh. The Duke, her father, is now Duke of Sachsen-Coburg-Gotha. A third son:

CARL ANTON, is married to Josephine, daughter of the *Comte* de Flanders.

DUKE GÜNTHER of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Augustenburg is the brother of Empress Auguste Victoria. Born 1863.

PRINCE CHRISTIAN, the husband of Princess Helene of Great Britain, is an uncle of the Duke of Schleswig and of Empress Auguste Victoria.

PRINCE CHRISTIAN'S BROTHER, FREDERICK (died July 2, 1865), married Mary Lee, daughter of David Lee, of New York, November 30, 1864, after assuming the Austrian title of *Prinz* von Noer.

PRINCESS VON NOER, his widow, who, by this marriage, became the aunt of the German Empress, married, on April 14, 1874, General —late Field-Marshal—*Graf* von Waldersee.

DUCHESS ADÉLAIDE of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg Augustenburg, mother of the German Empress, is a Princess of Hohenlohe-Langenburg and a cousin of Prince Hohenlohe, former Chancellor of the German Empire.

CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTION 7

THE ROYAL HOHENZOLLERNS AND THEIR KINDRED . . 9

CHAPTER I

Birth of the Kaiser—His Health and Physical Characteristics—His fear of Malady 13

CHAPTER II

The Private Apartments of their Majesties—Home Life—Relations between the Emperor and Empress—Daily Life of William II. 29

CHAPTER III

William II. and Mr. Vanderbilt—The Emperor's Study—His Personal Habits—His Wardrobe and Toilet-Room—King Leopold of Belgium 44

CHAPTER IV

House Regulations—William II. as a Family Man—William II. and M. Herbette, the French Ambassador 60

CHAPTER V

The Rôle of the Bismarcks—The Emperor and the Czar—Liebenau, Major-domo of the Palace—The Emperor's Passion for Travel . 79

CHAPTER VI

The Emperor's Love of Travel (*continued*)—The Court of Denmark—William II. and Francis Joseph—William II.'s Diversions and Restlessness—The "Song to Ægir"—The Kaiser as Speech-Maker—His Historical Blunders 93

Contents

CHAPTER VII

PAGE

The Kaiser's Amusements—The Menzel Festival 112

CHAPTER VIII

The Kaiser as Financier—His Niggardliness—The Kaiser as Architect—The Fall of Caprivi—Hohenlohe, Chancellor . . 132

CHAPTER IX

The *Dispositionsfond* Affair—The Kaiser and the Prussian Guards—The Guelph Fund 153

CHAPTER X

The Emperor's Love of Shooting—His Boon Companions . . 176

CHAPTER XI

Treatment of Servants by their Majesties—Imperial Housekeeping 184

CHAPTER XII

The Anonymous Letter Scandal—The Von Kotze Affair . 192

CHAPTER XIII

The Emperor's Relations with His Ministers—His Egomania—Parallel between William II. and Ludwig II. of Bavaria. . 211

CHAPTER XIV

The Parallel between William II. and Ludwig II.—(*continued*) . 234

CHAPTER XV

Examples of William II.'s Egotism—The Emperor and Lord Lonsdale—The Question of *Lèse-Majesté* and Egomania—The Emperor's Love of Beautiful hands 256

CHAPTER XVI

The Empress 283

CHAPTER XVII

The Waldersees—The Empress's Favourites—The Berlin Riots—The Empress Frederick 296

THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE COURT OF BERLIN

CHAPTER I

BIRTH OF THE KAISER—HIS HEALTH AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS—HIS FEAR OF MALADY

"Is it a fine boy?
"VICTORIA."

BUT one person, Major von Normann, of the First Guards, was present, when, on June 15, 1888, at noon, scarcely an hour after the gallant Frederick had breathed his last, the new lord drew the above despatch from his father's papers.

"What did his Majesty say on discovering the Queen's telegram?" I asked Normann at the Emperor's funeral.

"Not a word; yet, if possible, he turned a shade paler, while his left hand convulsively closed around the hilt of his sabre."

That the newly made Kaiser should invite Normann to attend him in his search for state papers and other documents, of which the one mentioned, while not the most valuable, was certainly not the least interesting, shows the extent of his confidence in this man, then esteemed the strictest disciplinarian of his "corps," but in no other way distinguished.

His Majesty's possible assistant, who died in September, 1890, by his own hand, and who had probably

aided in drawing up the proclamations to the army and the navy of June 15, 1888, was, in July of that year, already afflicted with the species of moral insanity that hastened his demise. After the death of the favourite, medical experts no longer hesitated to say that von Normann's famous rigour had really been monomania of vanity, while his brusqueness and cruelty were nothing short of impulsive madness.

Queen Victoria's telegram was dated January 28, 1859, twenty-four hours after the eldest son of Prince and Princess Frederick-William had seen the light.

In England, royal babes have "grand governors" and "deputy governors," a wet nurse and several dry nurses, a first and second "rocker," and days before the event is supposed to come off the great state officials, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, assemble in the palace. And when, at last, the royal mother is taken in labour, these invited witnesses stand in an apartment adjoining the lying-in-room, close to its only door, that must be ajar to make the birth lawful, and all because there has been some doubt about the paternity, or maternity if you prefer, of certain British rulers.

How different it is with us, though our closets be no less stocked with skeletons than those of the Stuarts and Guelphs. The great Frederick himself, author of the epigram: "If I have reason to believe that Michael instead of John filled the tart, why should I blame the result, and who cares whether the filling is pigeon or grouse, as long as the pie is good?" when a youth, was more than once threatened with death by his royal father because that gentleman failed to appreciate the maxim that it is ridiculous to hunt for the sire of a prince, provided that prince is no blockhead.

William was born *à la bourgeois*, and quite economically, a midwife receiving him, and a Court physician, assisted by the then highly reputed Berlin specialist for women's diseases, the late Dr. Martin, looking gravely on after the manner of his kind.

In Germany, you must know, a doctor thinks it

beneath himself to take the child, and is supposed to act only in case grave complications arise.

In the case of the Princess Frederick William of Prussia, Fräulein Stahl acted as *sage-femme;* she is now a motherly woman, and still continues her visits to the palace; so I often had occasion to talk with her about the great event of her life.

"Her poor Royal Highness," says the old Fräulein, "was only two months past eighteen years at the time, and very weak and nervous. You see, with her it was not an ordinary case of first motherhood; politics were mixed up in it to a frightful degree, and the poor young thing felt the fate of Europe trembling in her lap, as it were. For our good king was as crazy as a March hare, and twenty-one years had passed since a midwife was called to the Prince Regent's house to bring into the world little Louise, now the Grand Duchess of Baden.

"Our work had been divided as follows: Dr. Martin was to have special care of her Royal Highness, inasmuch as he was treating her for a nervous malady; the Court physician had to perform the ordinary duties for the 'all-highest' patient, while I was commanded to take the child. But the moment the little one was born a despairing moan from the mother overthrew all these fine dispositions.

"'The Princess is dying'—'she is paying dearly for her son,' whispered the doctors, while working with blanched faces over the prostrate body. Of course, I had to abandon the child momentarily to help them, and when—the Princess having revived after a little while—I knelt down before the couch on which our heir rested, imagine my fright: he had not yet uttered a cry, nor did he move a muscle. 'Still-born, by Heaven!' I thought. A gesture brought Dr. Martin to my side, and together we laboured over the newly born, I do not know how long, exhausting successively every means ordained by medical books, or practised in the nursery, to bring the child to life.

"When everything had been done that in decency could be done," so runs her narrative, "I took that royal

youngster under my left arm, and, grabbing a wet towel in my right, began to belabour him in good homely fashion, though the doctors groaned and everybody in the room looked horrified.

"'To the devil with etiquette,' I thought, seeing their grimaces; 'this is a matter of life or death.' So I spanked away, now lighter, now harder, slap, slap, slap, until—the cannons announcing the birth in the Lustgarten yonder had about half finished their official quota of a hundred and one shots—at last a faint cry broke from the young one's pallid lips.

"He was alive! I had snatched our Prince from the grave for which he seemed destined. The rest was easy sailing; the doctors again had their innings, and the simple midwife was shoved aside,"—this with a defiant snort.

"But what about the deformed hand and arm?"

"That was discovered only the third or fourth day after," replied Fräulein Stahl; "you see, at first we were all so busy putting life into the Prince, and keeping it in him, that no one thought of examining his limbs. Even when, on January 28, the Prince showed his son to his relatives, friends, and the assembled royal and princely households, no one observed that anything was wrong. But on the last, or the last but one day of the month, it was noticed that the child could not move his left arm; an investigation was made, and, in the course of it, the surgeons discovered that the elbow joint was dislocated. That, as your Ladyship knows, is nothing serious in a healthy child. However, in the case of Prince William, the surrounding soft parts were so injured, and the muscles attached in such a condition, that no one dared attempt to set the bone then and there, as should be done in all cases."

Fräulein Stahl has often reiterated the above in the course of our long official acquaintance, and always concluded her remarks with the statement: "I am well aware that the present condition of the Kaiser's arm is attributed to a mistake made by the persons officiating at the accouchement; but," and saying this the old maid's face

assumes its most determined look, "if that were not a falsehood agreeable to the Emperor and his mother—for even Dr. Hinzpeter, who knows better, repeats it—if that were not a lie, I say, do you suppose for one moment that I should be in this palace now to cripple more Hohenzollerns?" Saying this, Fräulein Stahl used to bring down her fist forcibly, and conclude: "My own opinion has always been that the child's left forearm was not properly made up by nature, as, indeed, his whole left side was weak, and is weak to this day.

"Besides, every one in the palace knows that, though his walk is brisk, it is but his Majesty's ever alert exertion that makes it so; if, at any time, the Kaiser ceased thinking of his shortcomings for only a moment, you would see his left leg drag. All his aches and pains, too, locate in his left ear and the whole left side of his head. Now, *Frau Gräfin*, remember what I told you about the Princess's condition. She was agitated by fears and depressed in spirits; tremendous responsibilities weighed upon her mind. Is it to be wondered at that her child was affected? The mother, poor girl! transfused her nervous ailments into the child she was carrying, and all concentrated in its left side. *That* the accoucheurs were, of course, unable to prevent or foresee; besides, they were, as already stated, far too busy completing nature's handiwork by inflating and keeping the Prince's respiratory organs going, to test the inferior parts of his body separately. If, on the other hand, the Prince had been a lusty boy, the dislocated joint would, undoubtedly, have been promptly discovered, and nothing would have stood in the way of its immediate correction."

So the chances are that Queen Victoria's telegram was answered in the affirmative.

I once heard the Kaiser, in conversation with her Majesty, roundly abuse Dr. Hinzpeter for saying in his book: "The Prussian army never admitted a young man physically so little fit to become a brilliant and dashing cavalry officer as William."

The criticism was passed shortly after the appearance of Hinzpeter's "Kaiser William II., a Sketch from Life,"

in the fall of 1888, and the Emperor, after warning his Frau against letting the volume fall into the children's hands, meaning the elder boys, continued: "Our German philosophers never know where to stop; whether they write truth or lies, they are bound to compromise and expose their friends without ever realising it."

This fateful left arm the Kaiser hugs closely to his body, allowing the hand, which is not deformed, but puny like a child's, to rest against his waist, or upon his hip, if on horseback. Any one following the German papers will probably remember that the official journals issue *ballons d'essai* from time to time to ascertain public sentiment in respect to the introduction of a belt for army officers, an article of accoutrement foreign to the Prussian uniform and out of harmony with its general style. As the Empress Eugenie re-established the crinoline in the sixties to hide her interesting condition, so William wants to change military dress to find a convenient resting-place for his poor left hand and arm, which, being about six inches shorter than the right, would attach to a belt unostentatiously. But, alas! the majority of officers feign to regard those recurring proposals as manœuvres of mercenary army contractors and treat them with fine scorn, so that William, unwilling to own his secret reason for the innovation sought, must go without relief.

The fingers of the crippled hand are movable, for, although the head of the radius of the forearm does not set properly into the condyles of the humerus, the limb is not altogether inert. There is consequently no reason for doubting the late Major von Normann's assertion that the Kaiser clutched his sword with the left hand. I have seen him do the same thing quite often when angry. But while he can take hold of an article, he cannot for the life of him lift it. For instance, he holds the reins in his left hand, but is powerless to direct the horse except with his right or his knees.

Without exaggeration it may be said, that, next to the stricken man, the imperial valets, four of whom, two ward-robemen and two *Kammerdiener*, are always on duty to

dress, undress, and re-uniform their master, suffer most on account of this infirmity. One of them is the intimate of her Majesty's *Kammerdiener* Nolte, and makes him the confidant of his troubles.

"We would not mind the work in the least," I heard him say once, "if the Emperor changed his uniform ten, instead of three or four times per day, it's the fear of injuring his lame hand that makes us nervous and gradually wears away our usefulness. And, besides, we must always be prepared to forestall the collapse of the 'all-highest' master when he balances himself on his left leg, as is his wont sometimes, when he is in a hurry to put on a different pair of trousers." And, after thinking awhile, the man added: "If they would only introduce for all troops, horse, foot, and artillery, not excepting the navy, a uniform pair of pantaloons, one-half of our cares would be removed; but this endless variety is killing us, and will some day, I fear, lead to a catastrophe."

His Majesty's right hand is massive and ugly in appearance, ugly, too, when clasping that of a friend. Before I was presented to him, Court-marshal von Liebenau warned me against his Royal Highness's mighty grip; but, though I went through the ordeal with teeth set, I could hardly suppress an outcry.

How proud the Emperor is of his personal strength is evident from the fact that he promptly adopted the simile suggested to him several years ago, when a foreign correspondent likened his fist to the "terrible right" of the then champion of the world, John L. Sullivan, whereupon his sister of Meiningen, who adores strong men, remarked: "I hope Sullivan has not the bad taste to wear as many rings as my brother."

This weakness is, however, to some extent excusable, as it is thus the Kaiser tries to hide a number of conspicuous moles which disfigure his hand. In this he partly succeeds, while in spots the glittering diamonds and rubies only tend to emphasise the blemishes.

I dare say very few people have a correct notion of the Emperor's height, for, as he is seldom seen without a helmet terminating in a point, the public is mystified,

and even close observers are apt to be deceived. In the palace this question is never openly discussed, but I heard the Kaiserin tell over-inquisitive Prince Eitel Fritz once or twice that his father measured five feet eight inches. That, I am sure, is a mistake; five feet five or six inches is the highest measure that even Adjutant Count Moltke, who has a very sure eye in such matters, gives him. Be that as it may, he cuts a respectable enough figure, holding himself as straight as an arrow, his uniforms being fashioned to correct the traces of *embonpoint* that develop from time to time in spite of rigid bodily exercise incessantly kept up.

The numerous newspaper persons who talk glibly about the Kaiser's "cancerous" ear trouble have, I imagine, information on the point that is more or less inaccessible to those in daily attendance upon his Majesty, for whether the dread malady, hereditary with the Hohenzollerns, has settled in that organ or not, is still an open question even with William's own physicians. It is not improbable.

Let us reflect a moment. It was Louise of Strelitz, 'sharing with Marie Antoinette the sad pre-eminence of beauty and misfortune," who carried carcinoma into the Prussian camp; the English escaped that doom only because economical George III. preferred Caroline of Brunswick for his son, her dowry being larger by a few thousand Thalers than the Mecklenburger's. There was method in that madman's madness, beyond a doubt.

All Queen Louise's portraits are remarkable for a scarf the royal lady invariably wears under her chin; even her oldest portraits and busts exhibited in the Berlin Hohenzollern Museum, no matter whether the Queen is in Court dress or ordinarily gowned, have this distinction. The scarf, it is said, was worn to conceal the marks of an operation necessitated by a swelling of the glands, and that is undoubtedly authentic, but it is also true that in this very spot the cancer that killed her, eventually developed. I have this information from descendants of old-time royal servants in the employ of the late Emperor William, Louise's last surviving son. The Queen died

of the disease at Hohenzieritz, her father's estate, in 1810.

That Emperor Frederick perished of cancer of the throat even Dr. Mackenzie had to admit. Therefore, if one may say so without offence, it would be in the line of natural development if William II., supposing he inherited the malady, were attacked by it in the neighbourhood of his throat. But it must not be forgotten that cancer is thought by some authorities to be untransmissible.

The only time that his Majesty's ear trouble was mentioned in the palace was, as far as I can remember, at the death of Henry XI. of Reuss-Gera, son of the Hereditary Prince Henry XXIV., and Princess Elise of Hohenlohe, a cousin of the Empress on the mother's side. The little one died November 4, 1891, of scarlet fever, we thought, and the Empress remarked: "I trust the Kaiser will not hear of the cause of death, for it always makes him uneasy."

"Why, has his Majesty not had scarlet fever?" I inquired, looking up from the despatch I was writing at my mistress's command, and which requested the Reuss Court-marshal to send more particulars.

"Of course," said the Kaiserin rather hesitatingly, "and in its most malignant form, too. How could you live here several years without hearing of it?"

As her Majesty's manner convinced me that it would not be agreeable to her to go into details, I curbed my curiosity until some time later I met Count Seckendorf, for many years chamberlain to the Empress Frederick. This nobleman enjoys her Majesty's supreme confidence and knows all the family secrets.

"You did well not to press this point," said the courtier, "for the Kaiser would be very angry if he heard of any such discussion. As a matter of fact, that scarlet-fever story—for it is a *story*—is reserved for use in a contingency that has not yet arisen, I am happy to say."

"You put me on the rack, Count."

"Others are there already and dare not complain,"

replied the *Kammerherr*, with a short, satirical laugh not devoid of a tinge of sadness—"ay, on the rack of public opinion, of the most cold-blooded insinuation and of direct reproof. Do you remember," he continued, "when a certain august person snubbed the Crown Prince's afterward the Emperor Frederick's, English physician because that gentleman had refused to take his cue from the seditious Bismarck and *Junker* clique when reporting upon a disease that played such a part in the state tragedy, then on the boards? To-day, opposite views on the same subject are trumps, and persons insisting that a specified malady goes with the crown of Prussia are publicly disowned and officially guillotined."

"I know, I know; but the scarlet-fever story?"

"As I have had the honour of already intimating: if the condition of Frederick's successor becomes alarming at any time in consequence of his ear trouble, your Lady-ship will see it in all the official papers."

It took no little persuasion to induce Graf Seckendorf to satisfy my curiosity, that had increased rather than abated during the last quarter of an hour. "The *official communiqué*," he said at last, "will read something like this:

"When his Majesty, as a young man, was stricken with scarlet fever, his mother, the Empress Frederick insisted upon treating the patient after a custom prevailing in some parts of England. The feverish boy was subjected many times daily to ice-cold ablutions, while his body and bed linen were continually changed, in consequence of which an acute cold settled in the left ear, which has ever since irritated the youth and man."

"Then," concluded the Count, "will follow a learned treatise showing that the Kaiser has water, not tumours on the brain."

I had to laugh at the *bon mot*, though immediately afterward both of us were ashamed, the one for uttering the other for applauding, so ill-natured a remark. We also looked about us to see that no one had, perchance overheard our conversation.

There is, I repeat it, as yet no evidence to justify the

worst suspicions regarding the Emperor's ear trouble, and yet, harassed as he undoubtedly is by the threat of maladies of the most serious character, the Emperor can scarcely be blamed for taking excessive precautions against contagion. That he lives the greater part of the year in the inconveniently situated Neues Palais, which, moreover, will never be a thoroughly modern residence for reasons that will be explained in another chapter, is mainly due to its solitary position at the end of the town. At the Marble Palace, where the imperial couple used to spend the summer while waiting for William's patent of general and finally for the crown, it was quite different. There they had neighbours, one of them the Hereditary Prince of Schoenburg, *chef d'escadron* of the Guard Hussars, who lived in a villa opposite the Neuer Garten.

Coming down to breakfast on November 18, 1888, the Kaiser learned that his Grace had died of diphtheria a few hours before.

"Diphtheria?" cried William, turning a shade paler than is his wont in the morning—"there seems to be something unhealthy in the air hereabouts. Let the chamberlain on duty be informed that my things must be packed and sent to Berlin at once."

"But the residential quarters in the (Berlin) Schloss are yet far from finished," interposed Herr von Liebenau.

"Never mind, there will be some corner where I can sleep and eat without running the risk of infection." And seeing that the adjutant still waited, he added, anticipating a question which etiquette forbade to be asked: "All my things—I am going to move."

That settled, his Majesty quieted down, and when, shortly afterward, the Empress arrived, he simply said: "Dona, I am going to Berlin and this house will see me no more." Auguste Victoria was thunderstruck, but seeing the husband determined, she dared not question him. So their meal passed in silence, while visions of domestic storms, of irreparable displeasure, even of a *maîtresse en titre* perhaps, chased through her Majesty's brain. And when, half-an-hour later, I entered her room to ask if the valets might go to the bed-chamber

and remove the Kaiser's clothes—the Empress often returns to that room after breakfast, and naturally dislikes meeting men-servants there—I found my mistress in tears, bewailing a fate that was as yet a mystery.

"Do you know why the Kaiser is going?" she said at last, after looking around to see that we were alone. The confession, for such it turned out to be, evidently deeply moved her Majesty, as her eyes streamed with tears. I could not understand it at first. "Of course," I replied, the question having been repeated, "his Majesty has heard of the death across the way, and, being so near the Schoenburgs, he is afraid that diphtheria might break out in the palace."

A sigh of relief escaped the imperial lady. She scarcely allowed me to finish. "Is the Hereditary Prince dead?" she exclaimed, with almost a joyful ring in her voice. Then changing her attitude, she added: "Why have I not been informed of this? I might have been spared an unhappy half-hour, and, besides, I should have sent my condolences to Princess Lucie."

William was as good as his word; his state papers published that very day were dated "Schloss, Berlin," &c., and ever since the Marble Palace has ceased to figure in contemporary history.

The Kaiser was right in surmising that his thousand-windowed palace in the capital would afford him lodgings of some sort; but as his own apartments, as well as the majority of the other suites, were undergoing alterations, he was obliged to make his quarters in the so-called von Kleist chambers, said to have been once inhabited by Princess Amalia's first lady-in-waiting, companion and confidante, the Baroness von Kleist. They are exceedingly beautiful, far more so than any of the gilded modern rooms that up-to-date Berlin taste has furnished, yet at the same time lack even the most ordinary conveniences.

I was at the Meiningen Villa, in the Thiergarten, on some business of her Majesty's, when the Princess brought the news. "I have just come from my big brother"—she always speaks of the Kaiser thus—"and what do you think? I found him installed in the Kleist apartments,

which the White Lady is said to haunt," she said to her *Hofdame*, in so loud a voice that others, as well as myself, could not avoid hearing it.

"'I am glad Auguste has had her baby,' I said to the Kaiser at once," continued Princess Charlotte, "for, as you know, von Kleist's child born in this apartment was disfigured by a terrible birth-mark on the nose, the broom of *La Balayeuse*."

"And who may that be, your Royal Highness?"

"The White Lady, of course, who used to announce her coming by vigorously sweeping the corridors. On that account, Frederick the Great dubbed her 'the sweeper,' or, in his beloved French, *La Balayeuse*. And that," continued the Princess, with a loud laugh, as if some hilarious *bon mot* had just seen the light in her luminous brain—"that was, after all, a fitting designation, for, *sub rosâ*, the White Lady of the Hohenzollerns is no lady at all. I have just inspected her favourite abode, and, I assure you, there is neither a bath-tub nor a toilet to be found there."

Although the Empress knew of the objectionable features of her husband's temporary abode (if she had not, her fond sister-in-law's witticism would have enlightened her, for, whenever her Royal Highness makes a joke, Auguste Victoria is informed of it by Charlotte's friends almost as promptly as by her enemies), she insisted upon following William within twice twenty-four hours. But the Emperor, pretending to be very busy with his speech for the opening of the Reichstag on November 22, would not see her until the following day. Now everybody knows that speeches from the throne are composed by the Chancellor, in this case by Prince Bismarck—hence it was clear that William had some other reason for absenting himself. As a matter of fact, he had heard that Fräulein von Gersdorff, a Lady of the Court, was suffering from a sore throat, and though her quarters were not in the Marble Palace, but in the gentlewomen's pavilion, situated in the park, he evidently feared that her Majesty might have come in contact with her. And not until he was reassured by myself—

he obtained the information in a very diplomatic fashion, I must say—did he emerge from his seclusion.

After I had withdrawn, Court-marshal von Liebenau was summoned.

"No more cases of diphtheria in Potsdam, I hope?" said the Kaiser, in his most imperious style.

"None that I know of, your Majesty."

"That you know of? My dear sir, that means either that you are out of touch with your department, or that cases of illness are secreted. At any rate, you will be good enough to telegraph to the Marble Palace that all persons of the suite, or in the royal service, who show any signs of throat trouble must be removed to a hospital at once, without the slightest delay. These are my strictest orders."

One of the Empress's favourite wardrobewomen, Frau Schnase, fell a victim to William's relentless anxiety on that occasion. Not being on duty for several days, she had remained in Potsdam, and, by the Court physician's advice, had taken a perspiratory treatment to reduce a swelling of the glands, very common among certain classes in Germany, so that at 11 o'clock that night she was in the midst of a healthy sweat and sound sleep, when the Major-domo awakened her to say that by "all-highest order" she must leave immediately.

Protest being out of the question, a closed carriage was procured, and the shivering patient was rolled off to the nearest hospital through the wintry streets.

"No room," reported the night-watch, when the driver summoned him.

"But she is one of her Majesty's personal attendants."

Of course that made a difference, and, after some more discussion, Frau Schnase was given a cot in the pauper's ward, third class, next to one in which a poor creature was just receiving extreme unction.

The Queen's wardrobewoman was a healthy girl, and recovered not only from the horrors of her unusual experience, but likewise from an illness she caught while exposed to the deadly exhalations of the sorry environment forced upon her. After a month or so, she was

back at the Schloss; but, daring to complain of the treatment that had been meted out to her, such biting sarcasm and contempt were heaped upon poor Schnase that she preferred to resign.

With our knowledge of the Kaiser's peculiar predisposition to diseases of the throat, this care exercised to guard against infection would seem quite proper, though excessively hard on others, had it not, in the course of years, become a mania. Assuredly, no one blamed his Majesty for postponing the Würtemberg manœuvres in the summer of 1893, when cholera was raging;—in those days all the royal servants were treated to unsugared tea as the standard beverage, which caused not a little indignation in the palace, the flunkies and maids insisting that the Emperor should make the tea palatable, if he forbade them to drink anything else; but it is quite another thing when the Kaiser refuses to confer with state officials because some member of their family might be indisposed. Interests of state are liable to suffer seriously through hallucinations of that sort, and if it were not for the love I bear my country, I might cite instances of international importance showing errors and inexcusable lapses for which this strange fancy is responsible.

The Empress, who faithfully copies all her husband's fads, either because she admires them or because she fears his displeasure, is as bad as he. Her Majesty frequently causes the discharge of servants for neglecting to report some trifling sickness in the family; and members of the royal household not living in the castle can enjoy a holiday at any time by simply furnishing a doctor's certificate stating that somebody with whom they are domiciled in the city is ill. This applies to the Kaiser's adjutant-generals, as well as to the chamberlains, equerries, ladies of the palace, gamekeepers, coachmen, cooks, and scullions. More than once have I seen his Majesty abruptly start away from a person with whom he happened to be conversing at a reception or ball, leaving the unhappy lady or gentleman speechless and crushed, because of an innocent admission that a

son or a daughter, or perhaps an uncle, had the measles or a cold. At the very mention of the fact the war-lord fled like a lion hearing a cock crow.

Once I found Frau von Kotze in tears behind some shrub in the White Hall, while all around her dancing was going on. "What is the matter with you?" I inquired; "can I be of service to you?"

"No, thank you, Countess," she sobbed; "but to think that he said that to *me!*"

"Who is he, and what did he say?"

"The Kaiser, of course! When he heard that my boy was ill, he remarked, turning on his heel: 'How dare you come to my house under such circumstances?'"

That, needless to say, happened before the anonymous letter scandal, and at the time when Frau von Kotze prided herself upon her particularly friendly relations with his Majesty.

How the Kaiser liked this old bed, with its heraldic designs, and upholstered side-pieces, whereon he could sit comfortably, smoking a cigarette and reading a novel by the light of the single wax candle standing on a little table near his end of the couch! But, lo! "those Frederick Leopolds" acquired modern English bedsteads, and, woman-like, Auguste Victoria would not allow her sister to eclipse her in being up to date.

So one fine day the *lying-in* beds were ordered home from Charlottenburg castle, their usual storage-place, and, the antique couch being sent upstairs, these things of brass and the mode were put up near the windows, to the intense alarm of the physicians, who feared they had made another miscalculation, and of relatives and friends who anticipated a catastrophe like that following the Pasewalk review, mentioned elsewhere. Of course, it was a false alarm, and our pretty Princess Louise was "regularly born" on September 13, 1892.

That the Emperor, at the bottom of his heart, has his doubts as to the propriety of using a common factory-made bedstead as the cradle of kings, is evident from the fact that for some time these brass affairs had to be removed every morning, while in their place the Elizabethan couch was set up; but the order, which evoked no end of dissatisfaction among the servants, gradually fell into disuse, and nowadays the triumph of brass over stately splendour is complete—in the bedroom, at least.

As every domestic arrangement in the palace is fashioned with a view to insure the preservation of the Kaiser's health, the doors and windows near the imperial bed are doubly screened by heavy curtains, summer and winter; for the faintest possibility of draughts is dreaded, and even the down quilts and blankets are so fastened at the bottom and sides that their Majesties must needs crawl into bed one leg at a time, there being only a breadth of about twenty inches left open.

The Hohenzollern household has never enjoyed a reputation for more than superficial opulence, and the paucity of its linen has often been the subject of ill-natured comment at other courts—a state of affairs which

the present Emperor's English mother tried to correct by large purchases during the reign of ninety-nine days; but when, after Frederick's death, trouble arose as to who was to pay the bills for these extravagances—Court-marshal von Liebenau designated them so in his *junker-like* contempt for English notions of nicety—her Majesty removed most of the newly acquired house-linen, and her successors, in consequence, often experience the chagrin of sleeping between sheets only partly fresh, especially in winter, when there are difficulties about drying linen. To be sure, Auguste Victoria has laid down a rule, stipulating that the royal couch be furnished with clean linen every day in the year; but as there is only a very limited stock to draw from, it happens sometimes that only one clean sheet is obtainable, and, in that case, the upper sheet of the two used on the previous night is taken for the under. Whenever that happens, her Majesty is exceedingly anxious that the Kaiser should not find it out, for, as may be well imagined, such evidence of penury would be likely to jar on his notions of divine appointment. If one thinks oneself little short of Deity, it must be exceedingly embarrassing to discover that one's linen chest affords only a single sheet at certain seasons.

While the room contains some exquisite pieces of furniture, it can, as stated, scarcely be considered in good taste. The lounge and some armchairs are covered in red, while two sofas are of the colour of the wall-hangings and draperies. Then there are wicker chairs with silk cushions covered with muslin, a crystal chandelier and bronze candelabra, a blue carpet, and vases and flower-pots of different styles, painted or majolica ware, besides Japanese tables, bamboo chairs, and masterpieces of Boule and *marqueterie*—a "regular second-hand dealer's shop," as the Empress's mother, the Dowager Duchess of Schleswig, once said in one of her bright moments.

The wicker chairs, by the way, have a history. In September, 1894, when the Kaiser was absent at the manœuvres with the King of Saxony, her Majesty, to kill time, which never hangs more heavily upon her hands

than when her lord is away from home, conceived the idea of painting the basket settees a bright lilac. It was to be a surprise for William upon his return.

"Before we go to bed, I will ask the Kaiser to sit down in his favourite seat for a moment, and then I will suddenly turn up the lamps, exhibiting my work. Won't he be pleased?" her Majesty had remarked to Fräulein von Gersdorff.

The latter acquiesced, as a matter of course, and both ladies started in upon the task at once, spoiling many pairs of gloves, besides their dresses and a carpet worth a whole regiment of wicker chairs. But this mattered little, seeing that, after several tins of mixed paint and a bottle of turpentine had been consumed, the *chef-d'œuvre* was complete. It was the day before William was expected back.

"But will they be dry in time?" asked a Lady of the Court, Gräfin Keller, when all the ladies of her Majesty had been called together to view this first attempt at household decoration.

"Certainly," said the Kaiserin, with a laugh; "*Kammerdiener* Lück made inquiries for me at the paint shop, and I followed the directions to the letter."

Next evening their Majesties retired in high glee, being well satisfied at their reunion, and the Empress's little programme seems to have worked to perfection till —but let her Majesty tell her own story.

"No sooner were the lights turned on," reported Auguste Victoria to her first Lady, Countess Brockdorff, the following day, "and while I myself was settling down in the second chair, when I saw the Emperor start up half surprised, half angry, with his hands and other portions of his body thickly besmeared with pigment that, I felt to my horror, also adhered to my body. With the Kaiser, you know, cleanliness is almost a passion, and his repugnance to coming into contact with anything like wet paint is so great that he cannot help losing his temper.

"'My dear,' he said, 'this is a sorry joke.' And neither explanations nor excuses were of the slightest avail.

"'Ring for turpentine.' That is all he would say.

"I awakened Haake, and told her to order Madame von Larisch to send up a bottle of the stuff; but, needless to say, she had none on hand. Then the Emperor demanded that one of the body gendarmes ride into town and fetch a bottle. Like a simpleton, he awakened the apothecary, only to be told that he must go to a drug store. Drug stores, as you know, have no night-bells, and are not obliged to serve customers after the ordinary closing time. It took the gendarme a full hour to get what he wanted, and even then he was obliged to invoke aid from a military patrol.

"The next thirty or forty minutes I spent in cleansing my lord's legs, arms, and hands, and afterward poor Haake had to do the same for me. It was the most miserable night I ever experienced."

While, as stated, this imperial bedroom is remarkable neither for great splendour nor simplicity—we expect to encounter the one or the other extreme in such a place—it is not without psychological interest. There is the Emperor's night table, for instance, whose upper drawer, at night always half open, contains a self-cocking revolver, fully loaded.

If one reflects how unfamiliar such displays are to women in Germany—they do not in the least mind sabres or guns—the Empress's alarm at this thing of ivory, steel, and silver may be imagined. Often how she has pleaded with William to discard the weapon, but the Kaiser insists upon having it near him. "If Alexander of Bulgaria had slept with a pistol, he might have founded a dynasty and perhaps be still alive," is one of his arguments—a queer one, to say the least. As a matter of fact, the sister of one of the conspirators who conducted him to Reni, August 21, 1886, kept Alexander company during the eventful night when abdication was forced upon him, and this young lady was, under the circumstances, certainly better protection than any number of weapons. A revolver might have been brushed aside; with a girl, vigorously taking her lover's part, it was not so easy a matter.

Another gruesome object in the room is the so-called *Sterbekommode*, an old mahogany chest of drawers, the top of which is loaded with emblems of death and sorrow. In the centre stands a large engraving, in a brown carved frame, representing our Saviour with the Crown of Thorns, his eyes looking heavenward, while at the sides are placed portraits of the Emperors William I. and Frederick III., of the late Empress Augusta, and Ludwig of Bavaria, all clad in shrouds. These pictures were made especially for his Majesty, and are not procurable anywhere. Strange to say, this morbid *memento mori* has to be set up in every imperial residence where the Court stops for any length of time. It is carted from Potsdam to Berlin, from there to Wilhelmshoehe, to Kiel, to Hubertusstock, to the yacht *Hohenzollern*, and to the Rominten hunting-box.

The Kaiser is a good husband, and is adored by his wife. That Auguste Victoria's love for him is only equalled by her fear of him is perhaps not his fault. He was heir to a mighty crown when he married her—she, the daughter of a penniless pretender who had to sign away his hereditary rights to the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein before the engagement was ratified by the old Kaiser, and Prussia granted him the indemnity of £15,000 per year, on which the family is now struggling along.

The consciousness of this humiliating bargain on the one hand, and of William's overpowering egotism on the other, have sufficed to make a wife, constitutionally not without energy, like wax in his hand.

Sitting one night in the Royal box at the Opera House with Duke Gunther of Schleswig, I heard him laugh immoderately at the remark of a stage hero, who, being asked: "Do you ever quarrel?" briskly replied: "No, not if I have my own way."

"It reminds me so much of my beloved brother-in-law and sister," said his Highness; "they never fight, because he sees to it that his slightest whims are obeyed, nay, more, anticipated."

That fits the case exactly: William for ever enforcing

his own will, his notions, his idiosyncrasies, and downright crazes by sheer force of sublime egomania ; the Kaiserin perpetually in a flutter to carry out his demands and make everybody else dance to the imperial piper's tune ! Only in one respect does he consult her Majesty's wishes without reference to his own inclination ; namely, by hardly ever absenting himself from the marriage-bed when at home.

A rough estimate, gathered from the Kaiser's printed calendars that are published for the benefit of court officials, body-servants, and newspapers, and minutely set forth how and where his Majesty spends his time, or is supposed to spend it, would seem to indicate that in the course of a year he is home about one hundred days—that is, for one hundred days he lives with her Majesty under the same roof ; but this circumstance does not in any way indicate that their Majesties take their meals together, or even see each other daily, except in bed and at breakfast. I clip at random one of those daily programmes :

9.15 A.M. Report by the chief of the military cabinet.

10.30 A.M. Report by the Chancellor.

12.30 P.M. Audience to newly appointed army officers. Luncheon on the train.

2 P.M. Departure for hunt at Count Finkenstein's. At midnight, return to the Neues Palais.

Or take another day :

9 A.M. Review of the —— Regiment on the Bornstedter Feld.

1.30 P.M. Luncheon in the mess-room.

6 P.M. Dinner with the officers of the *Garde du Corps*. Hour of return not stated.

The reader perceives an interval of several hours between luncheon and dinner, which might be devoted to wife and children ; but it must not be forgotten that a person so continually on the move as the Emperor needs a corresponding amount of rest, repose, and freshening up, even though in the bright lexicon of William there may be no such word as knocking off. Unofficially, the

Kaiser retires to his dressing-room after luncheon, goes to his little bachelor bed, sleeps an hour and a half, and then jumps into a hot bath, followed by an ablution of cold sea-water. That, of course, puts new vigour into him, and makes him ready for the evening's campaign, but his family see him not in the interim.

Though William never pays the slightest attention to time-tables, a special train being good enough for him at any season, he is enough of a Potsdamer to return home at midnight when the Court is established in the Neues Palais. Naturally, nobody, who is anybody, is astir at that hour, but that does not prevent him from making as much noise as if it were noon : clatter of wheels and hoofs, horses driven at breakneck speed, sentinels shouting and striking their fire-arms on the pavement, seneschal, adjutants, porters, secretaries, footmen, and valets standing at attention, or flying hither and thither, and all candles and lamps in the passage-ways and rooms blazing forth. Perish the sleep of retainers when the lord is awake!

These midnight specials are bad enough ; but when the fleet-footed four-in-hand is pressed into service for journeys to and from Berlin, her Majesty's eyes grow red with weeping, and her maids wish themselves far away ; for, as to home-coming, the quartet of Hungarian greys is even less reliable than the railway, while starting-hour and chance stops on the way are alike mysteries. Ah! to be German Empress is not all that it may seem by any means.

But the worst of it is when the calendar reads : " His Majesty intends to spend the night at the Berlin Schloss." True, that big pile has no Palais Netherland connected with it by a covered archway as the palace Unter den Linden where William's grandfather dwelt—in his salad days, the old man used this convenience for nocturnal poaching trips on strange preserves acclimated in the Netherland mansion ; but the Schloss is so large, has so many entrances, and there are so many people living in it, that the arrival of a lady more or less would not evoke the slightest comment among the sentinels and doorkeepers. What opportunities! What food for jealous reflection!

Whether William is away for a couple of days, or a week, or a month, he never writes to the Kaiserin, either directly or in answer to letters received from her. His adjutants, or other officers on duty, must attend to this as to every other item of correspondence, and such entertaining news as: "His Majesty arrived, or departed, safely; glorious reception;" or, "His Majesty shot so many hares, stuck a prodigious number of pigs, or killed so many deer or buck; weather such and such"—signed, House-marshal von Lyncker, or Master of the Hounds—often form the only link between the imperial minds for many weeks. Always of tantalising uniformity, the scantiness of these messages is indeed strange, considering that they are sent toll-free.

But if the Empress has to be satisfied with meagre tidings of her lord, the Kaiser gets along on even less home intelligence. Though her Majesty writes by every mail, it would never do to lose precious minutes that might be spent in amusement or sight-seeing by opening his wife's letters, the more so when one is sure they contain only nothingnesses (for items of interest must be telegraphed); but, at the same time, ignorance of any of the petty information forwarded with such touching regularity might cause vexation and suspicion. So the Emperor diversifies the return trips from his jaunts by carefully studying all the missives received from Auguste Victoria day by day—not an original method among husbands, I surmise.

A continuous source of amusement to his Majesty are the minute accounts of his daily labours in the vineyard of state-craft, and of almost any other vocation imaginable, published in books, magazines, pamphlets, and newspapers with a minuteness of detail and conceived in a know-all vein of assurance, interlarded with "deepest" and "highest" admiration, that make them soul-stirring and pathetic.

These descriptions of what is indescribable (for the greater part of the labours ascribed to his Majesty are creations of the authors' fancies) commenced to pour in on us almost with the beginning of the present reign; but the Kaiser's speech to the municipal council of Berlin,

on October 27, 1888, when he protested against the imputation that he travelled around for the fun of the thing, gave it its real momentum.

"I have placed my health and all my bodily resources in jeopardy to serve the cause of peace and to promote the Fatherland's prosperity by visiting allies and friends in all parts of the world," he cried; and German opinion, always ready to be corrected, at once changed its sing-song of the Kaiser-on-the-tramp into that of the Kaiser-at-work; and ever since have sycophants and mere imitators pronounced William a veritable perpetual motion of useful activity.

I do not propose to weary the reader by attempting a detailed account of the Kaiser's employments—of when he deigns to get up and when he "graciously" retires; works at governing, and governs the work of others; listens to reports and asserts himself; fences, rides, drives, and what not. These are matters for the official chronicler to record, and the reader will find them nicely done up in parcels, bound with black, white, and red ribbons, in Mr. Bigelow's various accounts of the Kaiser's life as the Kaiser sees it—that life which is but a "whirligig of hard labour for the good of the people and for the peace of Europe," or else an attempt to square accounts with the Supreme Creator. The Kaiser imagines he is going through one of these high-minded performances continuously, whether he draws plans for an impossible battle-ship, or part of the civil list, whether he risks his bones in a Troika driven by a German, who knows no more about handling three Asiatic stallions[1] than I do about cutting diamonds, or reads a speech from the throne:—it is all fish in the net of imperial aggrandisement thrown out at random to entwine loyal minds at home and abroad—people who think it an honour to be dazzled by princes, and "wink quite honestly at royal radiance."

[1] The Russian coachman whom Czar Alexander sent along when he presented the Kaiser with the famous vehicle, in the summer of 1890, was dismissed because he had the hardihood to ask 200 marks salary per month, and the native succeeding him promptly wrecked the Troika.

The underlying idea of Bigelow's and kindred efforts is to keep up the myth of incessant service rendered to the crown, a martyrdom of work broken occasionally by a stroke of genius, such as writing a novel, painting a landscape, conceiving a series of allegorical pictures, composing music, or inventing this, that, or the other thing.

I do not deny that the Emperor performs these various tasks—after a fashion that will be explained in another place; but I gainsay the Herculean nature imputed to most of them, and, furthermore, distinctly reject the idea that they are undertaken to alleviate a mind staggering under the weight of responsibilities and burdened by excessive desk-work. We can well imagine Frederick II. ordering a flute concert to be improvised after a day's bloody work in the field, or following a disgusting parley with his brother-counterfeiters.[1] Napoleon, flying from victory to victory in Italy, needed nothing so much as his courtesan-like Josephine; but these were men of consummate brain-power, men who, after tiring out twenty geniuses a day, needed but the tonic of sweet melodies, or an *heure du berger*, to be ready for another siege of labour.

William is not made of the clay of the philosopher of Sans Souci, nor of that of the lion of St. Helena, be he ever so clever a masquerader in the lion's skin. At school and at college the highest degree attained by him was "satisfactory";—another pupil, being no more satisfactory, would probably have been called incompetent. His attempt at handling large masses of troops, in the presence of the Emperor of Austria and the King of Saxony, in Silesia, September, 1890, led to disaster, while Count Waldersee preferred to resign as chief of the General Staff rather than permit the Emperor to meddle with his department and "periodically" discharge batteries of well-meant ignorance at him, as the General told

[1] During the Seven Years' War, Frederick II., assuming the royal privilege of raising the revenue, resorted to the coinage of millions of Thalers of about half the value of the standard coin; these he imprinted with the effigies of the Prince of Bernburg and the King of Poland, and forced their circulation among the people of the subjugated districts.

Bismarck during a visit to Friedrichsruhe shortly after assuming command of the Ninth Corps.

"My indefatigability," "my prowess," are perpetual themes with the Kaiser, and "You should have seen von Hülsen or von Kessel (both adjutants) puff and gasp after our half-hour's fencing, while I was as fresh as if I had just stepped from my bath," is one of his favourite boasts. He omits, however, to state, that, while wearing a linen jacket himself, these functionaries are encased in their stiff-collared, long-frocked uniforms, weighted down by silver tassels and braids, and with a heavy sabre at their side, labouring, moreover, under the difficulty of having to court defeat, for it would not only be imprudent, but even dangerous, to forestall William's exultations. No wonder the gentlemen lose their breath.

As Caligula wished that the Roman people had but one neck that he might cut it off, so the Kaiser would like to see the entire military force of the Fatherland personified in one being, that he might practise on it as on a lay figure—march, turn about face, take the ditch, prostrate yourself, stand on your head—but, considering that the Reichstag has a voice in the matter of public expenditure, his Majesty must be content to keep but two adjutants continuously employed. These gentlemen, together with the members of the military household, including representatives of all arms and of the navy, rarely leave the Kaiser's presence. Their office adjoins his Majesty's study on one side, and is connected with the orderlies' room on the other, wherever the Court is established.

Nearer to the Kaiser than all these faithful servants are his two *Dachshunds*, called Teckels, biting, snarling little brutes with jaws measuring half the length of their smooth bodies, and a corresponding penchant for people's calves, skirts, and petticoats. Except to the bedroom, from which they are excluded out of respect for the Empress's legs, these pets follow his Majesty everywhere, and when they make inroads on folks' flesh and blood, or clothes, William, who protects and coddles them, thinks it huge fun.

Whether the cunning Teckels know their imperial patron's overpowering position, I cannot say; but it looks almost like it, for, in the exuberance of their mischievous spirits, even the little propriety pounded into them in their earliest youth is now neglected, and Court-marshal von Eulenburg, whose pleasant duty it is to make both ends meet in the royal *ménage*, has his hands full covering up the damage to furniture, decorations, and bric-a-brac in the Teckels' path, or to such articles as they are able to reach by high vaults and other caprioles that the Kaiser has taught them.

"Why don't you poison the beasts?" once said Eulenburg's colleague, pious Baron von Mirbach, who is on the Empress's staff, when his Excellency had wearied him with a jeremiad about the *Dachshunds'* wickedness.

"I have thought of that myself, and would gladly go to this extremity, seeing that it meets with your most Christian approval, if I were sure that there would be no successors. But his Majesty might take it into his head to surround himself with Danish hounds, like Bismarck, and then none of us would be safe."

A very funny incident in connection with the Teckels happened in the winter of 1893, at the Berlin Schloss, when a select company, in which ladies in grand toilet predominated, had assembled at 1.15 P.M., in the Pillar Room, to await their Majesties' coming, in order to form the usual procession to the dining-hall, where a ceremonious breakfast awaited us.

As is customary, her Majesty's *Dames du jour*, Countess Keller and Fräulein von Gersdorff, stood a little ahead of the rest, facing the door through which her Majesty was to enter, and, the august hosts being expected at any moment, everybody was on the alert.

Suddenly the portals opened—bowings and scrapings, and most submissive salutations—but, lo! only the *Dachshunds* rushed in.

"*Peste!*" said Herr von Egloffstein, who stood at my side; while Prince Frederick Leopold, coming in just then, remarked: "I would give anything to have

on jack-boots and spurs! Wouldn't I whisk them off, or at least one of the litter, through the window!"

The Teckels, on their part, had no sooner caught sight of the silk stockings of the courtiers, than they began to bark menacingly, causing these worthies, who ten seconds before had paraded their calves with much gusto, to withdraw behind the ladies they were to escort. But these precautionary measures were seemingly superfluous, as the Kaiser's pets showed no particular desire for a bite that afternoon. Instead, each separately squatted down before Mesdames von Keller and von Gersdorff, and conducted himself in the most reprehensible fashion. Perfidious Teckels! all the floggings and nose-rubbings the fancier had applied for that very thing were forgotten, and, worst of all, the Kaiser, her Majesty upon his arm, and, like her, *en grande tenue*, entered at that very moment; so withdrawal on the part of Keller and Gersdorff was out of the question. On the contrary, the unhappy ladies were obliged to bow low, bending from the waist at an angle of forty-five degrees, while the Teckels, much relieved, clambered up his Majesty's hussar boots, wagging their funny tails.

"Oh! you bad boys!" cried the Kaiser, having taken in the situation at a glance; "if you do that again, I will have you birched—yes, indeed I will," he added, seeing ironic smiles all around. Then he had a fit of laughter that made him hold his sides, and which resounded through the hall. He even sought to inveigle the Empress into joining in his merriment; but her Majesty ignored him, and, blushing deeply, drew her consort out of the room.

The Teckels remained in the Pillar Hall while we breakfasted, and amused themselves by tearing into little pieces a beautiful fan which Countess Pückler, *née* Countess von der Schulenburg, who was one of the Empress's ladies before her marriage, had left behind.

CHAPTER III

WILLIAM II. AND MR. VANDERBILT—THE EMPEROR'S STUDY—HIS PERSONAL HABITS—HIS WARDROBE AND TOILET-ROOM—KING LEOPOLD OF BELGIUM

ONLY during the absence of their Majesties are visitors admitted to the Neues Palais—a rule from which there is absolutely no appeal. Even Mr. William K. Vanderbilt, whom the Emperor personally regards as the very richest man in the world—the Kaiser has not a great head for figures, as already shown—even Mr. Vanderbilt, I say, was on one occasion turned away from our gate like a beggar, or some Hungry Joe of the road. It happened in October, 1891, and made quite a stir in the palace.

Mr. Vanderbilt, it appears, had driven to the castle over the royal highway, and his coach was about to enter one of the outer gates, when the sentinel stationed there, observing the lack of a known and so-called "courtly" livery on the part of the driver and footman, stopped the horses and demanded a card of admission.

"This is his Majesty's friend," said Jacques Hartog, Mr. Vanderbilt's courier, with an air of magnificent assurance, but the soldier only stared the harder.

"Your pass, Herr!" repeated the infantryman.

"You don't understand things. This is Mr. Vanderbilt, the American millionaire!" Hartog was pleading now.

As the word "American" struck the sentinel's long ears, he raised his gun, for his lieutenant had taught him that the United States is "one of those confounded republics," totally devoid of a king, or princes, or even a respectable standing army.

"*Kutscher*," he commanded, in his most pompous voice, and apparently unmindful of Hartog's very existence — "*Kutscher*, right about face, forward march! March, I say, and march, a third time, or I will shoot!"

The guardsman kept his gun levelled on the intruders until the coach containing the lord of twice as many good, round dollars as the Emperor has subjects vanished behind a cloud of fine white dust, and there is no telling what would have happened if Hartog, who has a well-established reputation for pugnaciousness and obstinacy, had endeavoured to run the blockade in order to please his rich patron; for these sentinels carry sharp cartridges, and if they shoot—and they often do so on windy provocation—they fire to kill.

I cannot remember now whether the public honouring by the Emperor of a sentinel, who, while on duty, shot down some poor wretch, happened previously to Mr. Vanderbilt's unsuccessful attempt to visit the royal domain, or not. In that case, his Majesty called the offender to the front, shook him by the hand, and assured him of his royal grace, saying: "I am proud to commend you as an obedient and courageous soldier; such devotion as yours will always meet with my highest approval," or words to that effect. But I do know that the meeting was earnestly discussed in the imperial family and the castle about a month later, after the Emperor had delivered his famous speech at the swearing-in of the Potsdam recruits. There are two versions of that address. The one which the majority of newspapers printed at the time, reads: "Children of my guard, you are now my soldiers—mine, body and soul! You have sworn to obey all my commands; you must follow my rules and my advice without grumbling. It means that, from this day on, you durst know but one enemy, and that enemy is my enemy. And if I command you some day—and may God grant that I am never driven to this extremity—if I command you, I repeat, to fire upon your own relatives, your sisters and parents perhaps, remember your oath!"

That version is terrible enough; but, compared with

the original draft of the speech, which I happen to have seen on the Kaiser's desk, the words actually said may be almost characterised as tame.

There it was, in William's tall, forcibly-rounded hand:

"Recruits! Remember that the German army must be as ready to fight enemies that may rise in our midst, as foreign foes. To-day, disbelief and malcontent are rampant in the Fatherland to a heretofore unheard-of degree; consequently, I may call upon you at any time to shoot down and strike to the ground (*niederstechen*) your own relatives — father and mother, sisters and brothers. My orders in that respect must be executed cheerfully and without grumbling, like any other command I may issue. You must do your duty, no matter what your hearts' dictates are. And now go home and attend to your new duties."

I came upon this document quite accidentally, the Empress having ordered me to fetch from the desk in the Kaiser's study the calendar whereon his Majesty's engagements in and out of town are registered—if I am not mistaken, my august mistress desired to know the date of the Torgau jubilee (November 25)—and the precious composition was written on blank spaces between the dates I had to examine. "Monstrous!" I thought, reading over for the second time what William had the folly to indite and not wit enough to keep to himself; my heart trembled with anxiety for both country and Emperor And to think that he memorised this murderous self-apotheosis within earshot of his wife, and with his innocent babies sleeping above! And I—involuntary keeper of a state secret!

It troubled me a good deal during the night, but next morning's news quickly took the load off my shoulders, for her Majesty remarked that the Kaiser was much pleased with the impression his speech had produced—that of striking terror into the hearts of Socialists and others opposed to the imperial will.

"But does not your Majesty fear misinterpretation on the part of the over-zealous?" I asked; "the papers are filled with reports about brutalities in the army, and

about the overbearing conduct of the military at all times. At the unveiling of the Schloss Fountain in Berlin, I even heard a rumour that a Mr. Vanderbilt came near being shot while driving toward the Neues Palais."

That was a lighted match into a powder-barrel! Her Majesty caused inquiries to be made at once, and meanwhile got all her ladies together to discuss the exigencies of the case. Of course, in their opinion, it would not matter much if an ordinary mortal is killed by a sentinel; but the richest man in the world!—that was another thing. Would, in such a contingency, the United States declare war against Germany?

The Countesses Bassewitz and Brockdorff wished it would, for they have relatives in the navy; but when I suggested that the Yankees might prefer to take it out of German commerce, her Majesty became thoughtful.

"I have heard the Kaiser remark that the Vanderbilts could cripple the finances of the entire universe," she said; "if that sentinel had shot him, his brothers and heirs might drive our good Miquel to suicide."

While we were talking, *Kammerdiener* Nolte arrived with the information of the Vanderbilt incident mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, and additional news that Court-marshal von Mirbach had especially advised the millionaire that it was impossible to view the palace at the time, owing to the presence of the Empress.

Revenons à nos moutons after this excursion into the realms of state secrets and troubled finance. The Neues Palais, I tried to explain, is but rarely open to the public, and those fifty-eight rooms, of a total of two hundred, inhabited by their Majesties, are, as a matter of course, closed against intruders at all times. If, however, the ordinary run of visitors were permitted to view the private apartments of the imperial couple, they would quickly come to the conclusion that, like a good *paterfamilias*, the Kaiser allows his wife to keep for herself all bibelots and curios, magnificent Boules and quaint rococos, which past generations of royal Hohenzollerns have hoarded up, and likewise the most beautiful pieces

of furniture and treasures of art newly acquired with the first William's amassed fortune.

The Kaiser's upstairs study is a large, lofty room, and, being the rostrum from which the Empire and the whole world in general are addressed (who knows not the date line: "Given at the Neues Palais"?), I may be pardoned for describing it in detail. The walls of this historic chamber are hung with light-green damask, faded to such an extent as to make the stuff look shabby in spots, and the furniture is upholstered in the same material; net curtains, through the open-work of which green ribbons run, frame the windows, two in number, while the silk over-curtains are drawn back for the greater part of the time. Near the door leading into the reception-room rises one of those immense black marble mantels that we encounter everywhere in the castle—a fact furthering the suspicion that the builder, economically inclined Frederick II., ordered them by the gross at a discount. There is a small bronze clock on the mantel between two candelabra, just as if this was the parlour of Herr Rechtsanwalt Schmidt, or Frau Schlächtermeister Schultze, and near the fire-place is the Emperor's writing-table, a big, clumsy walnut affair with machine-turned feet, and trimmings such as may be found in any well-regulated household in Germany. The Berliner calls this monster of stilted inelegancy "Diplomat's Desk," for what special reason I do not know. When the Kaiser sits here, he has his back toward the windows, while to the right of him mighty folding-doors lead into a dressing-room, which in turn connects with their Majesties' joint sleeping apartment.

The hangings of the lower wall opposite the mantel are hidden behind two immense Boule chests of drawers with grey marble tops, specimens of the original Charles Boule's handiwork, according to the register in the Court-marshal's office. They have a veneer of tortoise-shell backed by gold bronze, and the wood is as hard as iron. One of these chests the Kaiser turned into a sort of pigeon-hole for his official correspondence.

The tops of these beautifully-modelled antiques, as

well as that of the ugly Berlin-made desk, are literally covered with marine views, charcoal sketches, and photographs of beautiful women, framed and unframed. As is well known, both their Majesties have a passion for photography ; but while her Majesty collects photographs indiscriminately, the Kaiser shows a decided partiality for those of charming women. True, he honours men in the service of the Court or government, or of social renown, quite frequently by requests for pictures ; but on receiving them he invariably shuts them away where the flies cannot get at them, while portraits of handsome princesses and other fair ones who made an impression upon the imperial mind are everywhere in William's rooms—figures large and small, in all sorts of costumes, or even distinguished by an absence of such ; plain pictures, silver prints, in colours or painted over ; personal gifts, inscribed with sweet sentiments, or the output of art stores.

Among the likenesses regularly found on the Emperor's writing-table, no matter whether he is at home or in his private car, or visiting with relatives and friends, is one of the Duchess of Aosta, *née* Letitia Bonaparte, remarkable for the fact that her Imperial Highness's overflowing bust is uncovered except for a collar of pear-shaped pearls. For this portrait the Kaiser professes a special liking, because, he says, it reminds him of a certain masterpiece representing Letitia's great-grand-aunt, the Empress Josephine. "Don't you think it does?" he once, after a lengthy dissertation on the point, asked his wife, who cordially detests her cousin of Aosta.

"Maybe," answered her Majesty ; "but Josephine might have exposed herself with impunity, for, I understand, she had breasts of wax."

Another picture of the Duchess, usually found on the Emperor's desk, is on more conventional lines, but, like the first, it exhibits Letitia's magnificent arms and fine hands to perfection. The significance of this will be shown in another chapter, where the Kaiser's relations to the fair sex are discussed.

Other picture favourites of his Majesty are the Grand Duchess Vladimir, Lady Dudley, that "little Marie of Edinburgh," whom William admires so much on account of her motherly labours in the interest of a Roumanian dynasty; the Princess of Wales in Court dress, her finely chiselled shoulders laden with jewels; and Fräulein von Böcklin, daughter of the Prussian General.

This young lady figures occasionally in living pictures, arranged by members of the Court society for charity purposes, and, with her rich Titian hair, big blue eyes, and chaste figure, is, perhaps, the most beautiful German girl of the period. The Kaiser likes her best in antique Greek costume, and Fräulein von Böcklin is under orders to send to his Majesty a specimen copy of every photograph she has taken.

I have almost forgotten to include in the above list the beautiful Countess Goertz, of whom more later.

In front of a sofa with metal feet and frame stands a *marqueterie* table of many-coloured woods inlaid, and of very unique Holland design, which, needless to say, is an inheritance from the great Frederick, who seems to have been the only Prussian King endowed with a sense of the truly beautiful.

To complete the inventory of the room, which is far from luxurious, or even cosy, it is but necessary to mention three or four armchairs, a big pier-glass with a marble console between the windows, a crystal chandelier hanging from the gilded ceiling, and a lounge with a profusion of loose cushions. The lounge, by the way, is worthy of kings "that have no use for dressing-gowns," as the Court-marshal of William I. once wrote to an enterprising tailor who had presented his late Majesty with an elaborate morning-wrapper. It is far too narrow and short to accommodate even so small a man as the Kaiser, and recalls the benches in the Sans Souci picture-gallery, which were built with the idea of producing the greatest possible amount of discomfort, so that the King's pages occupying them might not fall asleep.

A richly gilded folding-door connects the study with a reception-room, which latter is chiefly notable for the

air of inoccupancy pervading every nook and corner of the great barn-like apartment. As a matter of fact, the Kaiser uses it merely for a passage-way to the adjoining Marble Hall, where presents and newly bought stuffs for decoration, pictures or furniture, are placed on exhibition until their Majesties decide where they shall go, while visitors and friends are usually received in the lecture-room on the ground-floor, so called because there ministers of state and others deliver verbal reports, or take orders on current business, and listen to his Majesty's sublime conceptions of things.

The upper room is sparsely furnished with armchairs and sofas, perhaps a hundred years old, but none the more valuable on that account; for neither the multi-coloured pattern of the damask covering nor the carved frames exhibit refined taste or originality. As in most rooms of the castle, the wall and window hangings are of the colour of the furniture, and the chandelier and mantel like those in the study.

How well I remember this now neglected room when not so many years ago, during the lifetime of the then Crown Prince, I was a guest at the palace. That happy royal couple, Frederick William and Victoria, used it as an antechamber to the Marble Hall, and in those days the walls were draped with the grand tapestries that Napoleon had presented to the Crown Princess. That before her withdrawal from the castle Empress Frederick removed the gobelins and shipped them to her palace Unter den Linden, is but one of the many reasons why the son does not like his thrifty mother. Indeed, history repeats itself constantly in the highest as well as the lowest strata of society. The Smith and Brown families are "all torn up," because, at the apportioning of the estates, Aunt Sarah or Cousin John grabbed an old clock or silver teapot which Uncle Charles had coveted. The young Kaiser admires tapestry, if he need not buy it himself, and thought his mother might leave the French Emperor's gift where it showed to great advantage. Very naturally, Victoria held a different view, and, presto! animosities scarce buried raised their heads

again. If her Majesty had not been so quick about it, William might have enforced against his own mother the law providing that articles of decoration attached to the walls cannot be taken away by tenants.

We now retrace our steps to the study, and from there enter the Kaiser's dressing-room, treading all the while on the thickest and heaviest of carpets, irrespective of the season of the year, for the Kaiser detests the proverbially slippery parquet of the Court, though, according to a saying in vogue in Berlin, such a state of mind bespeaks an inherent inability to maintain one's equilibrium in most things. William, you must know, is never quite sure of his legs, the left one, as stated, being liable to give way at any time when his Majesty's mind is not concentrated upon posing physically as well as mentally. There are, besides, even with a character so continuously on the alert as William II., hours in the day when he likes to unbend and throw off that dignity of demeanour for which his public and semi-public appearance is noted; when he becomes a plain aristocrat like the one whom he takes for pattern in all things, who became plain "Fritz" or "Pantagruel" after midnight, when the friends of his Muse were expected to help the conqueror-king to forget the weight of greatness for a couple of hours.

Though personally I could no more imagine the Kaiser associating with a lot of cynics and mountebanks, such as Frederick kept to while away hours of leisure, than I would expect him to attend a state ceremony in undress, or with his mustache drooping, I can assure you, that in the seclusion of his chamber, he is a very different man from the one that even the members of his titled household know.

That he ordered his own living rooms carpeted throughout is against all tradition at the Berlin Court; but as nobody, who is anybody, invades his sanctum, why should he trouble? The small soirees, musicales, and receptions are invariably held in the Empress's apartments, or the semi-state-rooms of the parterre floor. On these occasions the Kaiser considers himself the chief

guest; he is the cynosure of all eyes, the pole-star that social and political navigators must for ever consult to avoid wreck; there the drill-ground echo: "Attention!" perpetually dins in his ears: "Attention to your arm," "Attention, your Majesty, your leg is giving way."

The strain must be awful; and I am sure, when the Kaiser in his speeches continuously refers to the labours of his position, he thinks of this martyrdom inflicted by his physical shortcomings, rather than of the many hundred miles he puts between himself and respectable *ennui* at his fireside, though wishing the public at all times to think he is fairly killing himself so that "every peasant in the kingdom shall have a fowl in his pot on Sundays."

The Kaiser's dressing-room is situated directly above Emperor Frederick's death-chamber, which latter now serves as a sort of corridor, from necessity rather than irreverence, I should add, for, when the Neues Palais was built, passage-ways leading to its great chambers were forgotten for the most part, as King Frederick quarrelled with the architect and finished the castle according to his own unprofessional notions. The hangings, furniture-coverings, and carpets are like those of the study, green or red respectively, and here, too, the damask is much the worse for wear in many places.

As the windows of the chamber overlook the barracks of the Lehr und Wehr Battalion, his Majesty, by simply putting his head out of the window, could alarm the garrison at any hour of the night or day; but, strange to say, this fancy never struck him, though he often travels half the night to chase some poor regiment in a wayside town or fortress out of Morpheus's and Heaven knows whose arms at unearthly hours.

In a small alcove opposite the windows stands a single brass bedstead with spring and horse-hair mattresses, whose English arrangement of sheets, blankets, and chamois cushions gives the servants perpetual cause for grumblings. To the left of the alcove is the door leading into their Majesties' joint bedroom, while on the other side a large closet, built in the wall, contains the

Kaiser's body-linen, not much of it. All the historical half-dozen shirts a Prussian monarch or prince is entitled to are there, but, *horribile dictu*, the article is innocent of cuffs, a commodity William attaches with the aid of buttons and pulleys, like any poor lieutenant. Of socks, never above a dozen pairs are in use, half-yellow, half-brown, and, like the underwear, of lisle thread; but the Hohenzollern house laws evidently impose no restriction as to handkerchiefs, which seem to come by the gross, all, like the shirts, drawers, and socks, inscribed with "W" and the royal crown.

While the modern articles of furniture heretofore mentioned are of the most ordinary description—store-goods, and not the most expensive, either—his Majesty's washstand is of truly royal dimensions and elaborateness, occupying the best part of the rear wall at the side of the mantel. It is made of light wood, with an imposing marble top and shelves, decorated with handsome crystals and silver boxes, carafes, brushes, and jugs. Was ever King of Prussia, or a Holy Roman Emperor of German nationality, so well fixed in respect to toilet requisites? And would William be that wonder of neatness to all the people in his employ, if it were not for his English mother? Such questions are constantly agitated in the palace among the servants as well as the officials, for the laundresses, and especially the maids who attend to the royal chamber, carrying up three flights of stairs the oceans of hot and cold water his Majesty requires continuously during the day till late at night, regard William's passion for cleanliness as little short of crime, and the Court-marshal has his hands full pacifying the overworked and discharging the sulky, particularly those dragging the Empress Frederick's name into the discussion.

"I should think myself in heaven," said my mistress some time ago after reading a magazine article to the effect that even the bedrooms of moderately-priced American apartment houses are provided with running water, hot and cold—"I should think myself in heaven if such were arranged for my husband's and my use, not to mention the children's, and I am the Kaiserin,"—

a Kaiserin, she might have added, whose revenues are sequestrated to ostentation. Still, we must not be thought to be unprogressive at the Prussian Court. Compare Voltaire's wash-bowl in the Monkey and Parrot Room of Sans Souci with the corresponding commodity on the Kaiser's table: a finger-bowl to an English bath, and yet scarce one hundred and forty-five years have passed since the French poet's arrest in Frankfurt.

There are basketfuls of sponges, and skin-brushes by the score, on the marble shelves, but not a sign of toilet waters or colognes, ——'s soap serving all needed purposes for the bath as well as occasional ablutions and shaving. And, with the persistency that is William's chief characteristic, he not only uses the article himself, but insists on its presence on the toilet-stand of every member of his household.

The Kaiser credits his clear complexion and the possession of a remarkably white and smooth skin to the fact that he has used soap of a particular brand since earliest childhood. And, considering the several constitutional ailments he is subject to, this simple means has indeed done wonders, for, though William is usually pale, his skin is ever clear and wholesome, like that of an eminently healthy person.

To the luxurious washstand his Majesty's bath furnishes a formidable contrast, being an ordinary zinc tub, painted. But the most astonishing thing about it is its peculiar situation. Let those who consider themselves Fortune's graceless children because their neighbour's house or carriage or wife or diamonds are their neighbour's, take courage in the thought that Germany's Kaiser, twice a King, as many times a Grand Duke, eighteen times a Duke, three times a Margrave, once a Burgrave—whatever that means nowadays—twice a Prince, nine times a Count, and fifteen times a Seigneur, besides being a Bishop, bathes behind a curtain in a stuffy corridor, the connecting-link between his dressing-room and the conjugal bed-chamber. That this statement almost challenges belief, I am not the last to appreciate, but can only reiterate its truth. And, when

you come to think it over, is it more startling than the story relating to King Leopold's bath in the Potsdam Stadt Schloss?

Court-marshal Liebenau was all in a flutter when, in August, 1890, his Belgian Majesty came to return the Kaiser's visit to Ostend, for his colleague of Brussels had informed him that the sovereign gentleman was addicted to the daily bathing habit, and demanded a hot bath at that. There was, at that time, only one royal palace available in town (the Kaiserin objected to entertaining Leopold at her own house), and this, the Stadt Schloss, contained but a single bath-room, which, to further complicate matters, is attached to the bridal suite where Prussian princesses pass their first night of matrimonial bliss. To lodge the old debauchee in that sacred apartment, which only once before had been defiled by a man who was not a bridegroom at the time of occupancy, by Napoleon I., was out of the question, and if a cabinet was fitted up with the regulation German bath-tub and stove, the King would certainly poke fun at the antediluvian arrangement.

What, then, could be done?

At last Liebenau hit upon a plan. He set up a modern enough bath that was fed by a cold-water tap, and placed under one end of it a row of gas-jets intended to heat the water in the tub. Should his Majesty find the bath too warm, calculated the official, with true native acumen, he can moderate the heat by turning on the cold reservoir.

Now, Leopold had enjoyed the previous night's festivities very much, and observing, in the morning, that his slightest wishes in regard to bodily comfort had been anticipated, he rose in right good humour. Stepping buoyantly into his bath at the cool end, and turning round, he sat himself down at the other, which, the gas having just been turned off, was nothing short of a furnace with the red-hot coals removed.

At the same moment an unearthly yell rent the castle from Marble Hall to scullery; the sentinels, marching up and down before the great gate, called out the guard,

and dozens of officials and servants ran to the King's suite of apartments, thinking that his Majesty had been attacked. At last, the cries not ceasing, Herr von Liebenau, together with the housekeeper and the King's adjutant, took courage and burst into the bath-room, where they found his Majesty dancing an impromptu Highland fling, and war-whooping alternately in French and German for liniments and cold-cream. What he said to the Court-marshal became known only after the latter's dismissal and disgrace, for the servants who heard his Belgian Majesty read him the index of Brehm's "Animal World" never dared repeat the all-highest's observations during Liebenau's official life.

As a further consequence of the incident, it might be recorded that King Leopold did not ride to the parade held in his honour that morning, but viewed the ceremonies from his window.

If business or pleasure prevents the Kaiser from taking his dip in the morning, he either bathes in the afternoon, or before or after supper; the stove must be lit at all times, day and night, and a tablet of soap is consumed on each of these occasions. After stepping out, the Kaiser applies to his body several gallons of cold water, in which sea-salt has been dissolved, baling it rather laboriously from a vessel near at hand.

Besides a barber's chair, several armchairs, and the furnishings already described, the dressing-room contains little worth mentioning, except a rare photograph representing her Majesty in a travelling-wrap; this was taken in Venice in 1890, after the imperial couple's return from the Orient, and has never been published; but although it does not flatter the Kaiserin, none of her good-looking pictures are visible, while, on the other hand, all tables, consoles, and chests of drawers bear witness to the Kaiser's vain passion for seeing himself pictured, all being literally covered with photos showing his Majesty in every variety of costume—at the manœuvres, on the parade-field, hunting, sailing, or making his entry into some town or village amid the loyal shouts of the populace.

A prince like the Kaiser, who owns a set of uniforms for each of the three hundred and odd Prussian regiments, horse, foot, and artillery, besides the ones appurtenant to the Bavarian, Würtemberg, and Saxony contingents, not to mention the Austrian, English, Russian, Roumanian, Spanish, Turkish, and Swedish armies that enrolled his name as colonel, general, or field-marshal—the proprietor of such an official wardrobe needs, of course, most extensive store-rooms for his multi-coloured, tasselled, and gold-laced treasures, and that they are magnificently cared for goes without saying.

Space forbids minute description of the interesting collection, which, moreover, can never be complete, as the European military Minotaur, feeding on seven millions of men annually—the original in the Cretan labyrinth was satisfied with seven youths and an equal number of virgins—keeps on expanding; in other words, as new types of uniforms and arms are constantly invented and added.

And when I say that the Emperor owns uniforms of all Prussian and almost an equal number of foreign regiments, not forgetting, by the way, that he is lord of the sea in Germany, Great Britain, Russia, and Sweden—dignities that carry with them cocked hats, broadswords and daggers, blue cloth, and silver and gold lace galore—I do not refer to the garments alone, but include all the ornaments, badges, sashes, side-arms, caps, helmets, czakos, busbies, czapkas, burganets, sabres, cuirasses, shoulder-points, knots and epaulettes, silver cords, belts, cartridge-cases, and laces, belonging to gala, full, and semi accoutrements.

All these innumerable and expensive accessories—a single pair of shoulder-knots often costs more than the uniform itself—must be on hand and ready for use at any given time, as bright and as good as new. Do you begin to understand why the Emperor is for ever unable to make both ends meet with an income of sixteen million marks per year? How times have changed with these Prussian kings!

The great Frederick's entire wardrobe was "sold to a

Jew for three hundred Thalers," and among the lot were the identical coat, breeches, and boots he wore at Rossbach. When, to come down to our own period, the late William I. desired to be photographed in the uniform of the *Garde du Corps*, one of his officers had to lend him a cuirass, his Majesty refusing to go to the expense of buying one. And these monarchs won more battles than the present Kaiser has earned, or even offered, racing-cups.

As Lafayette raised a frigate and crew at his own expense to assist the young American republic, so could William equip the marines of a first-class battle-ship, or the officers of ten army corps, from his wardrobe without being reduced to nakedness. He owns, besides those alluded to, scores of costumes adapted to various sports, numberless uniforms of yacht clubs in Germany and England, and last, but not least, an astounding array of plain clothes, with accompaniments of hats, gloves, ties, canes, shoes, buttons, and scarf-pins, which for each suit are especially selected, forming part of the garment, as it were; but this over-abundance of things is far from embarrassing the young megalomaniac, who, quite to the contrary, enriched the *olla-podrida* of this rainbow hecatomb of organised vanity, tinselled in spots and real in others, where the lion's skin edges the fox's and the hare's, by a new and original effort, called "hunt uniform," hideous in cut and colour, and which is occasionally bestowed by royal warrant upon some much-envied nobleman as a mark of special favour.

To sum up, I will mention that the Emperor's foreign uniforms alone occupied, in 1895, two immense rooms; perhaps an approximate idea of the extent of the clothes in stock can be gathered therefrom. In the Neues Palais, only regimentals in constant demand are kept, and these fill an imposing hall, separated from the dressing-room by folding-doors.

A *Kammerdiener* is in constant attendance there from early morning till night, so that the Kaiser is able to change his uniforms with the same celerity as his mind.

CHAPTER IV

HOUSE REGULATIONS—WILLIAM II. AS A FAMILY MAN —WILLIAM II. AND M. HERBETTE, THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR

ONE day, in the winter of 1892, when the Court was established in Berlin, I undertook to present to her Majesty "the all-submissive" compliments of the Countess Brockdorff, asking leave to be excused from second breakfast.

"Tell her Excellency that she has my permission, and with pleasure, and that nothing would suit me better than to have her and the whole lot of them stay away from my table all the year round," said Auguste Victoria, with a haughty shrug of the shoulders.

Being one of the "lot," I was surprised and vexed at this outburst. "If that remark was intended seriously, I beg to offer my resignation," I said, "and I am sure the Countess and other associates and all functionaries will follow suit, seeing that, for some unknown reason, we have had the misfortune to incur your Imperial Majesty's displeasure."

"No, no!" cried the Kaiserin; "I am very fond of you, and there is not one in the suite whom I dislike; but, Countess, can you not see that a woman, even though she be an Empress, wants her husband to herself once in a while?

"I have begged his Majesty a thousand times to take at least one meal besides breakfast alone with me and the children; I reminded him of the happy family life in his own father's house, where, except when guests

were present, the Crown Prince and Princess and all the children occupied one table, while the suite sat at another. So both master and retinue enjoyed perfect freedom at this pleasantest of meetings; but the Kaiser will not hear of it. To compare his Court with that of his parents is as ridiculous as to liken the establishment of some petty contemporary prince to that of Louis XIV., he says."

"According to the Duchess of Orleans, Charlotte Elizabeth of Bavaria, the Grand Monarque would have no one at his table but members of the royal family," I observed.

The Empress rose excitedly. "Is that authentic?" she cried.

"Your Majesty will find it in the Duchess's memoirs, and no doubt, also, in some of her letters to the first Queen of Prussia, kept in our archives."

"I am under great obligations to you for this information," said her Majesty, holding out her hand, which I kissed; "my good Knesebeck shall look the matter up to-day—at once. Do not fail to send for him, I beg of you, when going out. But," continued the royal lady, and the expression of her face fell, "will the Kaiser care one way or another? You know he thinks it due to his position to maintain a certain state at all times; and so our meals—the few we have together—are made semi-public functions by the presence of officials and strangers, while my poor children are perpetually kept upstairs and hardly see their father."

Her Majesty's complaint is only too well founded. With the exception of first breakfast, all meals in the palace are presided over by the marshal *du jour*, either Baron von Lyncker or Herr von Egloffstein, while two imperial adjutants, Grand-mistress von Brockdorff, two ladies of the Court, and one of the Kaiser's and the Kaiserin's chamberlains are bound to attend. Besides, all members of their Majesties' titled entourage have the *entrée* to the royal board, and are expected to avail themselves of this prerogative as often as possible, whether on duty or not.

That, under the circumstances, the sociable features are lost sight of and the stately character of the affair becomes emphasised, is self-evident, the more so as there are always guests, their number varying between two and fourteen, or even twenty, on ordinary days.

The house regulations provide that a list of invited persons be presented to the Empress and her ladies early every morning, so that they can dress accordingly; but my experience shows that it will never do to wear anything but one's semi-toilettes at table, whether the bulletin announces a brace of nobodies or half-a-dozen ministers and ambassadors, for, at the last moment, his Majesty may bring in the Chancellor, some sovereign or prince travelling *incognito*, or a whole host of fine-looking young officers whom he may have come across on one of his rides or outings, or who happen to report at the palace about meal-times. His habit of issuing these invitations, however, does not necessarily imply that William is a hospitable man; maybe he does not care a snap of his fingers for the individuals dragged to the gilded chair of *ennui* by "all-highest command"; he invites these gentlemen merely because they promise diversion, either by reason of their personality, or by information or gossip in their possession—and anything to escape the monotony of our daily surroundings, is the Kaiser's continuous prayer.

If his wife and her ladies are embarrassed, so much the worse for them. As to the cuisine, it is its business to be prepared for emergencies. But one must study the face of the Court-marshal, when five or ten minutes before dinner or supper time half-a-dozen, or twice as many, extra covers have to be laid, to appreciate the amount of labour that these imperial surprise parties call for.

It is not a mere matter of lengthening or broadening a table, and increasing the quantity of plate, crystal, and silver, but frequently the entire order of the seats must be changed, each guest, save one, being entitled to triumph over the other by reason of his patent of nobility, his rank in the army, or on account of the orders and

decorations he may possess. Think of the work involved, of the danger the Major-domo is running! I can assure the reader that no official of Emperor William's Court "would die of *ennui* if unable to fill up his or her time with ceremonies," Goethe notwithstanding. Our Court-marshals, above all, must have memories of unusual capacity, patience enough to stock a hospital, and some common sense besides, and even then mistakes are sometimes made.

There was Count Perponcher, old Emperor William's perennial grand-master, for instance. Of the two first-named qualifications this dignitary was possessed to a marked degree; only in the latter virtue did he prove deficient on one historical occasion, when, during Czar Alexander's visit to Berlin, in 1888, he seated Bismarck at a state banquet among the scions of the lower nobility, giving precedence to a lot of nonentities because their names figure in the second part of the Almanach de Gotha, while the Chancellor's is in the third.

His Grace did not say a word in protest at the time, but when, a year or so later (in August, 1889), Emperor Francis Joseph returned the newly made Kaiser's visit, he took his revenge. Not only was Count Eulenburg, Perponcher's successor, politely ordered to place the Prince where he belonged, opposite the two Emperors, but to further emphasise his position at Court and in the state, Bismarck chose to come two minutes after their Majesties and all the august company had been busy with their soup.

Eulenburg and the rest of the goldsticks were pale with terror and indignation, but Bismarck cut short their timid remonstrances with a haughty: "*Quod licet Jovi, non licet bovi;*" in polite English: Calm yourself, no ordinary mortal will dare imitate Jupiter's audacious step.

These repasts at the Berlin Court, whether of the noon, evening, or night order, are, as intimated, the very reverse of convivial, and are not very elaborate as to menu, either, for listless weariness hangs over the majestic board like a black pall, checking every individual effort.

The women sit as if encased in the tightest of corsets up to their throats, the men—

> "——a wooden, pedantic race,
> In every motion displaying
> The same right angle, and in the face
> A frigid conceit betraying.
> They sit about stiffly, as though upon stilts,
> Stuck up as straight as a needle,
> Appearing as if they had swallowed the stick
> Once used as the best means to wheedle.
> Yes, ne'er has entirely vanished the rod;
> They carry it now inside them."—HEINE.

But this starchy demeanour is not confined to the retinue and guests; Emperor and Empress, sitting opposite each other, are as ceremonious and formal as any of the rest of the company who hang upon the "all-highest" eyes and lips with such assiduity as to preclude enjoyment of the things set before them.

"Three weeks' table duty suffices to ruin any one's digestion," is a saying at Court, and, it might be added, "it's enough to spoil one's *savoir-vivre* too." In the fashionable restaurant at the Hôtel de Rome, in Berlin, a little old man was pointed out to me by a friend from the provinces. "I am astonished," said my escort, "that they allow so ill-mannered a person in this place."

"You mean the white-haired and beribboned gentleman in the corner?"

"The same, who swings his toothpick so furiously."

"Why, it is Count ——, chamberlain to the Empress Frederick."

"Really? And who may be the gentleman with him who strokes his long mutton-chops over his soup-plate?"

"That is President, formerly Minister, von Puttkammer."

"But they behave like pigs. Do they learn that at the royal table?"

"Nonsense; in the presence of their Majesties they are under such awful restraint, that, off duty, they let themselves loose, like boys escaped from boarding-school

drink out of their saucers, and wipe their mouths on their sleeves."

The guests and attendants at table are in gala or demi toilet, most of the younger officers being as tightly corseted as the ladies, while all the men wear the narrowest of uniforms, that scarcely allow them to breathe. Add to this feeling of physical distress the overpowering anxiety of preparing for the supreme moment when the Kaiser or Kaiserin shall address one of them, or give the signal for laughter, and it will be obvious at once that taking pot-luck with Prussia's royalty has its drawbacks.

But the most miserable person of the glittering assemblage is she who wears the costliest gown, the biggest diamonds. At meal-time the Kaiser chooses to make a display of his conversational gifts, or his wit; and Auguste Victoria knows only too well that she cannot rival the one, and that the other is out of her reach. So she sits quietly, addressing little nothings to her ladies in an undertone from time to time, while painfully alert, that none of his Majesty's jokes and innuendoes escape her.

William seldom speaks to his wife directly, except to say that he likes or dislikes her costume; and if she asks questions, he answers in a tone that forbids further conversation; quite frequently he does not reply at all, turning his left ear toward the Empress and affecting not to hear her.

As such moments, when pride and love must rage in her bosom, we all feel deeply for her Majesty. Sometimes she appears ready to cry in the face of everybody; but the woman in her must for ever give way to the Queen, and so she swallows her mortification, sits still, and smiles, her little grey eyes languidly fixed on the husband so eager to shine as a humourist.

Ah, the sorry attempts at jesting that guests at the royal board must endure! By reeling off any absurdity that may come into his head, the Kaiser tries "to put life into the company," as he calls it, and his remarks, usually addressed to one of the adjutants, provoke peals

of laughter, as a matter of course, as soon as the author gives the cue for hilarity by accentuating the end of his speech with a roar. The person spoken to must pay back in the same coin, and naturally, does his best, for his Majesty admires nothing so much as the gift of repartee. But for all that, the rejoinder is frequently as weak, or weaker even, than the pleasantry that occasioned it. It is one thing to be a lord among wits, and another to be a wit among lords.

"Why is my big brother like the *Fliegende Blätter* in a foreign country?" asked Prince Henry of a small circle of sympathising relatives during a recent visit of our Court in Kiel.

All the highnesses, royal and otherwise, gave it up.

"Because," quoth Henry, "he is always sure of raising a laugh whether he offers something witty or inane. So it is with the *Fliegende Blätter*. It has a reputation for being funny, and, where German is not understood, is applauded indiscriminately."

Supper at the Court is no more entertaining than the midday meal: the same stiff-necked formality, the same strain after effect; the Kaiser endeavouring to be his own merry-Andrew, the rest of the company dull for the most part. As to the Empress, she remains as impassive as ever, smiling in her subdued manner; only her corsage is considerably lower, and she wears an extra handful or two of jewels. An extreme *décolleté* is her Majesty's strong point; but, despite allurements of toilet and the assiduity with which her charms are set off, William cannot be induced to remain in his wife's presence a minute longer than courtesy demands. As soon as coffee is served (at Potsdam this is done in the so-called *Tassen Zimmer*, an apartment modelled in the shape of a cup and the furniture of which is so constructed as to assist that illusion), the Emperor takes himself off with his men friends and attendants and repairs to the billiard-room, where he sits for hours, with one leg on the table, swinging the other to and fro, while his adjutants and guests entertain him with imitations of music-hall and circus people, small talk, and droll stories of the coarsest

grain, reeking with the fume of the drill-grounds and the barrack-mess.

This love of *risqué* stories is a Hohenzollern failing; contemporary writers agree that Frederick the Great shunned woman's society because it obliged him to bridle his tongue and observe the ordinary decencies of life; the "romantic" Frederick William IV. was a trafficker in classical and modern pornographic literature, and the present Kaiser's grossness of speech is notorious enough to find an echo in the imperial nursery.

An incident like the one concerning the wicked Teckels, mentioned in another chapter, is at all times sure of royal appreciation. William will talk for weeks about it, and neither his friends nor the dignitaries of state with whom he comes in contact are spared the recital, including disgusting details. Indeed, three-quarters of the time when the public imagines William to be wrestling with problems of the day he sits on the billiard-table in the described attitude, with his adjutants and the chief members of his military and civil households standing around him, smoking cigarettes and telling stories, and listening to tales affecting personages of the Court and society here and abroad.

And while this lascivious tattle is carried on, her Majesty sits, perchance, in the Cup Room, magnificently gowned, knitting shapeless little woollen caps for orphan asylums, and talking religion and cheap charity schemes to her grand-master, Baron Mirbach, or to the much-beloved von der Knesebeck. What contrasts! what dissimulation! I often thought to myself, when, being in attendance upon her Majesty, the echo of sneering allusions to a friend's or acquaintance's wife or daughter wafted past me through the door of the billiard-room, left ajar by some lackey with his tray, or opened by the Kaiserin's order, that she may feast her eyes on the husband she loves so well. The head of the nation, whose unceasing industry is the talk of the Continent, vainly trying to kill time with buffoonery; the sovereign lady, "mother of the poor," working penny caps in a gown the cost of which would keep for ten years the

poor boy or girl for whom the knitted thing is intended, and assure the little one a splendid education.

It is a saying at Court: "Give the Kaiser an up-to-date rendering of the 'Merry Jests of King Louis XI.,' and you will receive a standing invitation to accompany him on his Northland trips: tell him something more indelicate than the 'Tattle of the Nuns of Poissy,' and he will book you for an ambassadorship;" and that is no exaggeration, as will be seen in the chapter on William's boon companions.

The Kaiser's inclination for the ludicrous even intrudes itself into "business of state"; for, as he considers his ministers but royal servants of high degree, so are Court functions regarded by him as *quasi* affairs of government.

"When I have to stand three or four hours to see a few thousand persons pass by, I like to get some fun out of it, if possible," I heard him say to Court-marshal Count Eulenburg, when the latter reported, at the New Year's reception of 1896, that some six thousand persons had made application for the *grand Cour*, the German Drawing-Room.

"At your Majesty's command," answered Eulenburg promptly; and, as the little blonde courtier withdrew, the Kaiser turned to the Empress: "What is this devil of an Eulenburg up to? I asked him to make the *Schleppen Cour* endurable, and he positively smiled assent. I hope he will not hire a troop of the great unwashed to masquerade before us in the guise of Socialist deputies."

The Court-marshal had, of course, no thought of forcing things, but shrewdly surmised that, among the thousands of new-comers anxious to make their first bow before royalty, and among the old friends ready to pay their respects at the beginning of the season of festivities, some one, of a surety, would furnish food for amusement.

As it happened, one of the persons to be presented was a Countess von Arnim, *née* Countess von der Schulenberg, who is exceedingly short-sighted. Eulenburg knew her infirmity, and was, perhaps, thinking of it when

smiling acquiescence to William's proposition. At any rate, contrary to custom, he let her Ladyship proceed to the throne unguided, and she bravely passed both their Majesties without obeisance.

Everybody stared, and I confess myself to having felt extremely uncomfortable; but, happily, the Kaiser, remembering his Court-marshal's promise, overlooked the slight to his dignity.

"*Adieu, gnädige Frau!*" his sharp voice rang out—"adieu, and no matter if you have the advantage of us"

At the same moment, the poor Countess, who had meanwhile reached one of the embrasures of the windows, bowed to the ground, thinking that by this time she stood in front of the throne, and then, hearing the Kaiser's sarcastic remark, promptly swooned.

Next day, at noon, she reported to Countess Brockdorff to submit her excuses, and was astonished to learn that his Majesty had given orders to invite her to dinner.

"The Kaiser wants to have more fun with me!" cried poor Arnim.

"Not at all; he desires to thank you for the diversion offered during that tedious ceremony."

"I vouch for that," said Eulenburg, when appealed to, "and, in proof of his Majesty's gracious feelings, I extend the invitation to include Madame's charming daughter." He added: "Whoever amuses the King cannot be too well treated."

And, as a matter of fact, the Countess and Fräulein were nearly smothered with kindness by their Majesties; I do not know of any persons, comparative strangers, who were so well treated at Court as these ladies.

The Grand Cour of 1897 was likewise relieved by a ludicrous incident. On that occasion a Fräulein von Bonin had essayed to represent a lily; and not only her entire dress, including the train, was made to bear out that idea, but on each side of her coiffure two Easter lilies rose high above her, nodding to and fro with every movement.

"Good Lord!" said the Kaiser *sotto voce*, but so loud

that the chamberlain on duty could hear it, as this botanical wonder passed by, "I hope B—— (naming one of his brothers-in-law) won't see her. He might take it for an allusion to the pretty calf-coloured antlers his wife is growing on his forehead." At this, the Empress, who does not like the lady alluded to, burst out laughing, and it took the imperial couple some minutes to regain their composure.

That in the feverish hunt after amusements and excitement, family life at the German Court, of which the contemporary press makes so much, is a delusion, goes without saying, though, to accuse William of neglecting his Frau, in the ordinary sense of the word, would, perhaps, be unjust, for he keeps up appearances in a general way, and I have reasons to believe that he loves his wife. Yet he has a knack of forgetting her very existence whenever he thinks he is better off alone, which, I know, is extremely painful to Auguste Victoria.

And the worst of it is, this fixed idea of complete self-sufficiency grows stronger and stronger with him as his egotism gradually develops into egomania. With all that, however, he is not an unkind husband, albeit his actions often imply great lack of conjugal gentleness and generosity. It is merely his boundless love of self that claims ascendency in his every action, no matter whether it affects the best friend he has in the world or his worst enemy. As in those awful days at San Remo, when he claimed, as representative of the old Emperor, precedence over his afflicted mother on the way to the village church, so he uses his present supreme position as a club to intimidate all directly depending upon him into a state of quiet, but utter, submissiveness. And this has been going on so long that the Empress, on her part, has become used to it, and would think it queer, indeed, if this state of affairs were changed.

As to the children, they are there for dynastic purposes, to learn and to grow up; what more can be required? Her Majesty's complaint, that they hardly see their father, is true; seldom, if ever, do the youngsters

appear at table, and the reports of their governor as to conduct and progress in learning must suffice, time for personal consultation or a friendly talk not being available.

"I am afraid the Kaiser will never take interest in the children until they actually enter military service," said the Empress to me, after I had read to her an article reporting his Majesty's speech on the occasion of Prince Adalbert's entry into the navy (June 24, 1894). Of course, I politely disagreed with her Majesty on that point, but at the same time could not help thinking it would be a good thing if these fears were realised. Imagine a father taking his ten-year old stripling by the hand, and, after presenting him to a regiment of grey-beards, battle-worn and noted for their education and courage, say to them: "This moment, when Prince Adalbert becomes one of you, is of the most eminent importance to the entire history of the Fatherland." Who would blame a boy, after that, for overbearing conduct and disinclination for study? If, at the age of ten, he be a historic personage, to whom old and tried men must look up as to an idol, a moulder of the nation's destinies, what is the use of further effort? Elagabalus became Roman Emperor at the age of fourteen, yet had to wait four years before he was recognised as a god.

To come back to our own times, compare William's eulogy of his son with the speeches the Kaiser's grandfather and father delivered at his own introduction to the army, on February 7, 1877, when, having reached his eighteenth year, he became a lieutenant in the First Guards.

Said the old Emperor: "The service expected of thee will require many functions that may appear petty and unnecessary in thy untried eyes. But thou must learn to understand that there is nothing trivial in doing one's duty, and that each stone in the construction of our army must be well hewn and thoroughly anchored, if the grand edifice shall stand. And now I commit thee to thy labours, which fulfil as thy superiors dictate."

And the father, afterward Emperor Frederick, said:

"I am proud that my son is privileged to commence his military studies in the First Guards, and I congratulate him on his good luck. He ought to be proud to wear your uniform, and I commend him to your good graces, my comrades."

While not particularly loving toward his wife, the Emperor honours her with excessive jealousy, and is beside himself with rage if a man-servant, ever so innocently, looks at her Majesty when she is dressed in a *décolleté* costume. As Napoleon bounced M. Leroy the Worth of his times, for complimenting Marie Louise on her fine shoulders, so William deals unmercifully with officials and servants who venture to look at his wife.

One day in the beginning of December, 1889, while the Kaiser was on the way to Dessau, her Majesty went to bed early in the afternoon out of sheer chagrin, because she had not been allowed to accompany her husband, and, while reading a novel by lamp-light, she was disturbed by a stealthy noise at the door.

It made her sit up in eager expectation. Could it be possible that the Emperor had reconsidered his decision, and had returned to take her along as first promised? Auguste Victoria prepared to look very charming; but who shall describe her terror, when, instead of the expected husband, the black curly head of a man-servant, bearing a load of fire-wood on his shoulder, appeared, and cautiously spied about to see if he might enter.

The Empress gave a scream of rage and agony, while a crash, as if a hundred-weight of sticks had come to the ground, and hurrying footsteps, told the fate of the transgressor.

A second later the luncheon of Kammerfrau von Haake, and of the wardrobe and chamber women eating in the maids' ordinary downstairs, was disturbed by incessant ringing of the electric bells from the royal apartment. It was at once evident that her Majesty was pressing her hand against the row of electric buttons at her bedside. What could have happened? Had fire broken out and was the Kaiserin in dire distress?

The women ran to the bedroom, despatching several lackeys they met on the way to notify the house-marshal, chamberlains, and Court-physicians, as they expected to find their mistress half-dead at the very least. When they burst into the room, however, they quickly perceived that their apprehensions were exaggerated: the august Lady was not hurt, nor was she in any visible peril, but, instead, sat up in bed shaking with indignation. "A thief, or at any rate a man, entered my room stealthily!" cried her Majesty, gasping for breath. "The matter must be fully investigated, and his Majesty must be informed at once. Let the intruder be arrested and brought to justice without delay."

The unhappy quartet of servants, von Haake, Schwerdtfeger, Gleim, and Schade, were speechless. "It would kill his Majesty to receive such a despatch," suggested the Kammerfrau at last, and the Empress decided to consult with her grand-mistress, Gräfin Brockdorff.

I happened to be in the Countess's apartment when Frau Schade and Frau Gleim came to report in breathless monosyllables.

"A man in the Kaiserin's chamber — impossible!" cried Brockdorff, adding: "It will cost us our positions if his Majesty hears of it."

"Maybe the Kaiserin has been dreaming; she had cold pork for second breakfast," I put in.

"No, it is really true, others besides her Majesty have heard his steps," said Frau Gleim.

At this moment, Madame von Larisch, mistress of the household, entered to know the cause of the uproar that was shaking the palace to its foundations. "If you will wait here for a little while, you shall hear it all," said Gräfin Brockdorff, already in the corridor. Returning after fifteen minutes, her Excellency walked right over to where I was sitting with Frau von Larisch, and, assuming her most haughty tone, addressed her in these words: "By command of her Majesty, I have to announce to you the 'all-highest' disfavour. I think it would be best if you packed your *Siebensachen* (rags) and left at once."

Madame von Larisch drew herself up. "Your Excellency," she said, "I demand an explanation."

"Your Ladyship shall have it and without delay. Her Majesty distinctly commanded me to take off your head, '*reissen Sie ihr den Kopf ab*' and I have merely given the implied meaning of the 'all-highest' words."

"But what is it all about?" I saw that it was high time to interfere between the two ladies, who had never shown much love for each other.

"While her Majesty was in bed," said the Countess, with much deliberation, "one of the fire-place attendants entered with a load of wood, and the Kaiserin blames Frau von Larisch for the intrusion; this after I had succeeded in demonstrating to the august Lady that the man must necessarily be innocent, for he could not know that her Majesty was in the house. However, Kammerherr von der Knesebeck had to telegraph the whole incident, with all details, to Dessau."

Several hours later the whole palace knew that Johann, the wood-boy, had been instantly dismissed without compensation for his loss of pension, and a bad "character" into the bargain. Frau von Larisch, to everybody's surprise, went unpunished, while next morning an autograph letter from his Majesty arrived, commanding that henceforth no male servant should enter the joint bedroom or the Kaiserin's dressing-room, all the work, including wood and water carrying, taking up of carpets, and the like, being thrown upon the maids.

This incident has a sequel, for, her Majesty being as fastidious about girls in her room (when the Kaiser is present) as William is about man-servants, she is now obliged to make her own fire in the grate on chilly mornings whenever her husband is at home. What a parody on royal state this—the Empress-Queen getting up in her "nightie," and in the cold and damp, to light her own fire! Verily, truth is stranger by far than fiction!

Although very partial to courtly splendour and festivities, which cause a conflux of people, the Kaiser hates nothing more than the *fêtes* which etiquette compels him to hold annually in the Berlin Schloss; he hates them

principally because that magnificent pile, appearing so formidable from the outside, and which was designed for Brandenburg society at the beginning of the eighteenth century, is entirely inadequate to the accommodation of the many thousands nowadays privileged to dance attendance upon, and actually dance, eat, and drink with the Kaiser and Kaiserin.

Of course there is always room for the sovereign, no matter if his company be packed like sardines; the discomfort of his guests does not trouble him, either, but the ocular demonstration of the unsuitableness of his house does; it sorely aggravates him to be reminded of the fact that he is not rich enough to build reception-rooms equal to the demands of the times.

"If my ancestors could afford to construct this castle, why should not I erect one suitable to *my* requirements?" he argues, forgetting the fact that not the Hohenzollerns but the Prussian people paid for the Schloss and were all but bankrupted in doing so, the builders, Elector Frederick and the first two Kings of Prussia, meanwhile promising to pay back the millions wrung from their pockets—when their alchemist had succeeded in making yellow metal. So the castle was finished under false pretences, and the necromancer, being unable to keep his word, was hanged—all of which happened one hundred and seventy-five years or more ago.

The winter *fêtes* at the Prussian Court are institutions in their way, the splendour of which the favour or disfavour of the monarch may enhance or reduce, but even the sovereign's enmity—such as William bears to these festive entertainments—cannot blot them out. To do that would seem too much like breaking with time-honoured customs and taking away the perquisites of two mighty classes in the state: the trades-people's profits, and the aristocracy's chief opportunity for disporting its few remaining hereditary privileges. Only in case of Court mourning, or great national disasters, may the list be curtailed, and never was a Prussian King more eager to take advantage of these means of escape than William is.

When, on January 4, 1896, his grand-uncle, Prince Alexander of Prussia, died, his first words were: "Now we may rid ourselves of the company of our unknown friends, the sweet public, for this winter at least," and Grand-master Count Eulenburg was straightway ordered to recall the invitations for carnival and abandon the engagements with purveyors, and so forth, already entered into. Yet one cannot mourn a relative of the seventh or eighth degree for ever, and the Kaiser all the more readily consented to give one more ball before the end of the season, as the municipal council of Berlin at that time was particularly obstreperous, and as it was expected that by a lavish expenditure of money flowing into the people's coffers its good offices could be gained. So, when almost everybody had given up the hope of dancing and supping "at the Kaiser's," several thousand ladies and gentlemen were made happy by receiving the well-known "commands."

Then came that affair with Ambassador Herbette, the political side of which is public property. The representative of La Belle France objected to the intimacy that had sprung up between the Kaiser and the French naval *attaché*, M. de Grancey. "If you understand your business, you must know that you are nothing but a well-paid and highly ornamental spy," he is reported to have said to de Grancey; "how can you serve your country in that capacity, if you allow yourself to be bamboozled by imperial favours and dazzled by the monarch's amiableness and charm of speech?"

To the Emperor, who had asked him as a personal favour to desist from his resolution to procure M. de Grancey's immediate recall, the brave Herbette made answer: "*Parbleu*, your Majesty, I insist upon doing my house-cleaning in my own way."

These two speeches are matters of historic record, in substance, if not literally, and I may add that the above version is from the Kaiser's own lips;—I was present when his Majesty reported the case to the Empress. What the world does not know, is the double meaning of the Frenchman's allusion to house-cleaning. An

ambassador, like other great lords, has two families, a personal and an official one. De Grancey belonged to the latter, and Herbette disowned him as soon as so extreme a measure seemed called for. But by that time stories of the Kaiser's weakness for the beautiful Madame Herbette had reached the ears of her husband, invariably the last individual to hear a rumour of that kind.

In the present case, scant secrecy had been observed; frequenters of Pariser Platz, where the Embassy is located, had noticed the Emperor's phaeton and pair in front of the hotel for half-hours at a time day by day, and had talked about it, first to curse William's apparent zeal in running after the Frenchman; afterward, when they had learned of the existence of a beautiful woman in the mansion, to smile approvingly and wish the sovereign success on his excursions into the enemy's camp.

At Court, the ice had been broken by a remark of the Princess of Meiningen, who said one day, when the Kaiser's love for France was discussed: "Yes, and I understand he has the good taste to be wanting in respect to a Frenchwoman of *esprit*, whom we all know;" but, as far as my information goes, neither her Royal Highness nor those beer philosophers in the Linden *cafés* possessed a shadow of proof to back up their abominable tattle. There was probably nothing at all in this talk, yet, whether there was or not, Herbette decided to stop it. When the invitations for the Court ball arrived, he accepted with a few polite phrases, but three days before the affair came off he caused Madame to send her regrets, saying that his Excellency alone would be able to do himself the honour to attend the ball.

House-marshal Baron von Lyncker happened to have business in the Kaiser's study when the perfumed note bearing the ambassadress's initials in silver arrived. "His Majesty," he says, "tore open the letter, and, scanning its contents, exclaimed: 'Advise Eulenburg that the ball is off. He must at once recall the invitations.'

"At your Majesty's orders," said the dutiful Herr

von Lyncker; "but as the greater part of the delicacies for the buffets are already in the hands of the chefs and pastry-cooks, while the sweetmeats were delivered a few hours ago, what is your Majesty's pleasure with respect to these goods?"

The Emperor had listened with every indication of impatience.

"Never mind, the stuff that cannot be used in the house may be sent to the hospitals," he said when the House-marshal had finished. Then, walking straight up to him and staring with flaming eyes into space, the Kaiser continued: "Do you know why I disappoint these several thousand invited persons at the last moment? Because I cannot permit Herbette to again set foot in my house. *He* wants to come, but he shall not. Indeed, I would rather see this Schloss in ruins than spend an evening with him in the same room."

He read Madame Herbette's letter a second time, and, acting as if a sudden thought had struck him, added: "The news that de Grancey is to go has just been confirmed. It is a direct insult and scandal. I will not rest until Herbette is made to leave Berlin."

CHAPTER V

THE RÔLE OF THE BISMARCKS—THE EMPEROR AND THE CZAR—LIEBENAU, MAJOR-DOMO OF THE PALACE—THE EMPEROR'S PASSION FOR TRAVEL

THE Kaiser has many nicknames; Reise-Kaiser, Gondola-Billy, Wilhelm-der-Plötzliche (William-the-Sudden) being the most common; but the people of the palace call him Der Einzige (The Only), with apologies to Frederick the Great, who also enjoyed that title, though for vastly different reasons,—*The Only*, now that Liebenau is gone.

Major von Liebenau was a man after William's own heart, his double in more than one respect.

A lieutenant in the First Guards, he attracted the then Prince William's attention by the same characteristics that, it is claimed, at one time cemented the friendship between the heir to the German crown and the young man destined to inherit, besides Varzin, the Chancellorship of the Empire, the Presidency of the Prussian Ministry of State, and all the rest of his father's dignities. William, Herbert Bismarck, von Liebenau—a triumvirate of ambition, libertinage, and insolence!

It was in the winter of 1886 and 1887, when William studied statecraft in the foreign office under Count Herbert's tutelage, that Liebenau got his real foothold in the princely *ménage*, then established in the Marble Palace, which he ruled with a high hand. At the same time the heir to the crown was revelling in the charms of divers queens of tragedy, comedy, and the ballet, connected with the royal play and opera houses. For the young wife these were indeed unhappy days.

How often she has poured the story of her mortification and disappointment into mine and the Countess Brockdorff's ears! Poor Princess! she had been brought up to the sober truth that royal women must get used to dividing their husband with others, and bowed her blonde head under the historic bane not with the worst of grace. What rent her heart was William's cynical way of regarding woman's supreme duty and highest honour—motherhood.

"I don't want to be looked upon exclusively as a means for propagating the royal race," she cried once; "but, under Count Bismarck's teachings, the Prince seems to have forgotten that I possess any of the qualities of a woman besides that of child-bearing."

Fearful lest her Royal Highness's hatred of Count Herbert might lead her to rash remarks in the presence of the old Emperor and her husband, with both of whom young Bismarck was *persona grata*, I tried to intervene by suggesting that he was not altogether a bad man, having fought with distinction in the French war.

"Yes, yes, I have heard that *ad nauseam*," interrupted Auguste Victoria impatiently; "he is said to have received three balls, and since then has made three of our sex extremely miserable—that person in Bonn, who caused the duel; the poor Princess Carolath, and myself."

Countess Brockdorff, who then, as now, held the post of grand-mistress, flared up at this: "I must not suffer your Royal Highness to class yourself with these females," she said; "it is morbid excitement that consumes you."

After that, I thought it my duty to inform the Princess Imperial of the state of affairs.

"Myself and husband," she said, "know all about this vicious Herbert and the evil influence he has over our son, but," and her Imperial Highness lowered her voice, "there is bound to be a change in a few years, you know, and the Kaiser that will be is determined to clear the decks (*reinen Tisch zu machen*)."

When Victoria said this, the old Emperor was nearly

ninety years of age, and though the first signs of Frederick's terrible illness had already manifested themselves, no one dreamed of the quick and awful end. However, the sovereign lady kept her word, as far as it was possible for her to do under the painful circumstances that attended her husband's reign, and no matter how often Prince Bismarck deputed his son to transact business with Frederick during the ninety-nine days, he was as often sent away and ordered to tell the Chancellor that his Majesty desired to confer with no one but his Grace in person.

"It is the death-knell of the Bismarck dynasty," Count Seckendorf used to say when about to deliver one of these messages to the haughty secretary.

The fall of the Bismarcks is a matter of history, but that the present Empress played a decisive part in it, few, if any, writers have an idea. It is true, Auguste Victoria dreaded her husband's parting with the Prince, but feared even more the constant intimate relations between William and Herbert; and she once succeeded in striking his name from the list of guests on the Northland trip, giving his place to her "uncle," Count Waldersee, who assiduously worked against the Iron Chancellor's interests during the journey. Count Herbert, however, was invited to accompany the Kaiser to England and on the Oriental tour, mainly, it is rumoured, on account of his boast that, as Secretary of Foreign Affairs, he would find ways and means to open the doors of the Sultan's harem to his Majesty.

Whether Herbert made such insane promises I cannot say; enough that my mistress believed he did, and persuaded Countess Waldersee to believe it also. Her Excellency, you know, is a most pious woman, and Herbert necessarily figured in her inventory of proscribed persons with a big "H," as Baron von Mirbach put it. (The German word for Hades, like the English, commences with an "h".)

How the two august ladies worked for the downfall of the hated man: a few pin-thrusts here, an allusion to the old Chancellor's ambition to set up a throne beside

the throne there; "Crown-Prince Herbert," "Woman-beater Herbert," "Son of his father," and what not? And in the end: "Down goes the mantle, and the Prince, he follows."

Of the old Chancellor, guilty of two unpardonable sins, that of possessing undoubted popularity, far exceeding the Emperor's, and a hearty disinclination to accommodate himself, after years of supreme rule, to the part William intended for him—of this "obstreperous servant" the Kaiser had been tired for a long time, and the separation enforced in March, 1890, was nothing if not premeditated. Indeed, the Kaiser's inviolable intention to dismiss the "old man," as he called him, was expressed as far back as October, 1889, the repository of imperial confidence at that time being no other than Czar Alexander.

The Czar was the last of the great monarchs to repay the Kaiser's visit, and was frosty and ceremonious in the extreme upon his arrival—a circumstance which, strange to say, filled the Empress with joy.

"Thank God," she said to the Countess Brockdorff and myself, while waiting for the dinner signal, "if the Czar's ill-humour continues, there can be no more talk of that betrothal," meaning the contemplated engagement between the Czarowitz and her Majesty's sister-in-law, Princess Marguerite of Prussia.

Well, the ill-humour did not continue—it vanished after the Czar had had a long talk with Prince Bismarck; the Kaiser was pleased outwardly, but extremely mortified that the Chancellor, not himself, had brought about the change.

"This Bismarck is for ever assuming his sovereign's functions," he growled, and, in order to have Alexander's ear exclusively, he hurriedly arranged a hunting expedition in the royal forest at Eberswalde.

On this occasion the *pourparlers* about the betrothal were renewed, and—according to the Empress, who was disturbed at the prospect of losing another relative in the realms of the Greek Church—progressed favourably at first, but, unfortunately for his own great designs and

luckily for the Kaiserin's pious scruples, his Majesty could not constrain himself to follow up his success by the premature announcement, made strictly *sub rosâ*, that he intended to dismiss Bismarck at an early opportunity.

As Alexander could see only the forerunner of grave complications in such a course, our northern guest grew visibly cold on the last day of his visit, and thereafter confined himself to evasive answers when the betrothal was mentioned.

While this proves beyond doubt that the parting with the Chancellor was long premeditated, I am quite sure, from remarks made at different times by my royal mistress, that the Kaiser had no notion whatever of getting rid of Count Herbert too. Only the gross coercion used against the "old man" on the one hand, and, on the other, the fact that Bismarck, when making the historic appeal to the Empress Frederick—"his last stand"—learned that the petticoat *camarilla* had worked against his son as diligently as the Kaiser's increasing querulousness and thirst for independence opposed retention of office by himself,—this aggravating circumstance alone forced resignation upon the Count. With respect to the meeting in the old *Kronprinzen-Palais Unter den Linden*, I know for a certainty that his Majesty's mother, when refusing to interfere on the Chancellor's behalf, spoke unreservedly of the evil influence which Herbert had exercised upon her son, and recited how much the Empress had suffered by it. These facts, Auguste Victoria, though otherwise not given to adulation of her mother-in-law, has often mentioned.

After that, persons of delicacy quickly recognised the only course left open to Herbert; but the Emperor, swayed by his own likes and dislikes and looking neither to the right nor left, gave his former friend an opportunity to insult him.

"And what will *you* do?" he asked the Secretary of State.

"Follow my father," answered Herbert, with fine spirit.

So much for the Herbert Bismarck *intermezzo*. Liebenau, though more the Kaiser's *alter ego* than the Count, was never on terms of intimacy with William, who selected him as Major-domo, when, after his marriage, the princely household was established, for the same reason that, in 1897, prompted his nomination of a general of cavalry for the position of Reichs Postmaster, viz.: because he was a good driller, a disciplinarian of the sort that does his master's bidding without the slightest thought of the feelings of others. An official reputed to carry out orders unflinchingly, and, if need be, unscrupulously, is very apt to attract a man of William's arbitrary temperament.

There was still another point speaking in von Liebenau's favour. At the time William's household was established, his Royal Highness's income was a little over £10,000 per year, a mere bagatelle, considering the pretensions of both master and mistress; but the Court-marshal, coming from a family in which the Prussian saying, "Golden collar—Stomach hollow," has had practical demonstration through generations of uniformed, spurred, and sabred vaingloriousness and misery, promised to carry on the stewardship that would have been moribund in most other hands, to a nicety—promised it, and kept his promise. He did more. During the first two or three years, at least, he managed to set aside for the personal use of the Prince all the money needed. Later on, debts were contracted; they were not of Liebenau's making, though.

But, while ingratiating himself with William's household and, in fact, with the entire royal family—for the old Emperor, as well as the Crown Prince and the young man's uncles and aunts, held very decided opinions on the subject of his Royal Highness's money-spending proclivities—this "mounted beggar," as the late Empress Augusta called him, proclaimed his natural inclination for the noble art of browbeating by regulating his conduct toward the house officials and servants in every respect after his master's example. As stated, he was not a member of Prince William's inner circle of friends;

but his Royal Highness's intimacy with Count Herbert, whose sentiments toward women were notorious, sufficed as a cue for Liebenau's official intercourse with the Princess. Outwardly loyalty itself (I doubt whether a more loquacious reciter of courtly phrases and of assurances of respect and humility ever addressed a royal lady in our days), nothing seemed to give this intriguer more satisfaction than to refuse, on the plea of expenditure, whatever the future Empress expressed a wish for in the way of food or petty luxury, not on the daily list.

"Think of it, Countess," she said to me one morning in the spring of 1888, "this Liebenau refused me a glass of Madeira for second breakfast, claiming his budget would not permit such extravagance when we are alone, there being hardly enough to set the table as it ought to be set when the Prince himself is present.

"'My appropriation scarcely warrants the purchase of expensive wines for his Royal Highness's own consumption,' he had the impudence to tell me. I nearly choked with anger."

When William became Crown Prince, Liebenau retained his position at the head of the largely augmented household; but, on assuming the throne, the Kaiser kept him on the anxious bench many weeks before the rank and title of Chief Grand-marshal of the Court and House was bestowed on the ex-captain of the Body-guard Battalion. Yet, no sooner had his highest ambition been realised, than Liebenau began to outroyal royalty. He established a reign of terror at the palace, as William had done, to a certain extent, in some departments of government; but, while the Kaiser waited until May, 1891, before promulgating his boast and threat: "There is but one master in the Reich—none other will I tolerate" (in the speech before the Rhenish Provincial Diet), Liebenau at once made it clear to everybody in the imperial household that he was the real King's lieutenant, vested with absolute power, from whose decisions no appeal could be had. And that was not idle talk, for in domestic affairs the Kaiser listened to no one but him.

Never was monarch so hungry for popular applause as William during the first two or three months after Bismarck's dismissal. Ever since the old Chancellor had thundered his proud "We will meet again!" into the teeth of imperial disgrace, William had flitted from banquet to review, to festivities at the opening or closing of schools, to laying of corner-stones, launching of yachts and steamers; he had paid court to all princes suspected of Bismarckian sympathies, had made conciliatory addresses to the Reichstag, had appealed for friendly support in Königsberg, and had even gone out of his way to honour his well-hated grandmother by a special state dinner on the occasion of her birthday; in short, he had done everything in his power to dissuade the German people from too much Bismarck discussion and to gain adherents to the imperial cause.

Although the régime of the *alter ego* came to an end half a dozen years ago, his influence is still felt at Court and even in the affairs of state, and if, sooner or later, judgment must be passed on the Kaiser's mental condition, the Liebenau bacillus deserves special investigation. It was Liebenau's reckless hard taskmastery which nourished and upheld the Kaiser's notion that he can make the impossible possible, that his word suffices to put seven-league irons on a tired horse and double and treble his people's capacity for work. Another imperial idiosyncrasy, stimulated by Liebenau, was William's passion for travel, that guaranteed the Chief Court-marshal either considerable perquisites when accompanying his Majesty, or, if left behind, untrammelled dominion at home. I happen to have kept a record of the Kaiser's jaunts under the Liebenau administration, and in the following give a list of the official visits paid by his Majesty from August, 1888, to May, 1890, leaving out hunting-trips and others of a private character.

William went to Stockholm and Copenhagen, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Munich, Vienna, Rome, Hamburg, Leipzig, Breslau, Stettin, Bückeburg, Oldenburg, Wilhelmshafen, Schwedt, Weimar, Brunswick, Dresden, Osborne,

Sandown Bay, Aldershot, Carlsruhe, Strassburg, Metz, Münster, Minden, Hanover, Schwerin, Athens, Dessau, Darmstadt, Worms, Bremen, Frankfurt-on-the-Main, Altenburg, Königsberg, altogether stopping and holding Court in thirty-seven different cities and towns in Germany and abroad, many of which were visited three or four times, and all within the short space of a year and ten months.

To find excuses for this almost perpetual absence from the seat of government (Count Shuvaloff, at that time Russian Ambassador in Berlin, told me the Czar —Alexander III.—used to say there was only one similar case in history, that of Charles XII., "the Madman of the North"; continuing: "Wait a while, and, like Charles, he will some day send his boot to preside at the state council!" which was not half bad for an autocrat)—to quiet public opinion on the score of these incessant junketings, all sorts of excuses are invented by William and his suite, as once before mentioned; he goes away "to take a bird's-eye view of politics, and to come back unbiased by partisan preferences"; if he neglects to look up the King of the Belgians, "our African possessions may be wiped out" even quicker than Eugene Richter wishes it; a month's sea-voyage affords the Kaiser a much-wanted "opportunity for studying his inner man," and who would deny the necessity of such an undertaking?

But the real motive that prompts these journeys is the morbid restlessness of which the Kaiser is possessed, and that scourges him, a crowned Ahasuerus, from town to city, over seas and mountains.

The Kaiser's adjutants, military and civil secretaries, or representatives of the various cabinets, body-physicians, valets, wardrobemen, keeper of the silverware, cellarer, master of the horse, coachmen, grooms, mouth-cooks, kitchen employees, and the host of chasseurs and flunkies who accompany him on each trip, are so well trained in handling the endless accessories and baggage, that an order to get ready at an hour's notice neither surprises nor disconcerts them. If the tour or outing

on which they are about to enter has been under consideration for some time, a printed itinerary is furnished to the chief of each department, but quite frequently not one of the men is able to learn anything beyond the hour of departure.

The Kaiser, you know, addresses his attendants only in monosyllables, and does not even take the trouble to speak distinctly. To ask repetition of a sentence, or to put any question whatever, would be an unheard-of breach of etiquette, so there remains nothing to do but to take chances and work ahead in the dark, the more so, as the adjutants often know no more of his Majesty's intentions than the small stable-boys who go with every imperial party to assist at tennis.

Especial secrecy is observed if the destination is some town or fortress in the far west or east of the Empire, where, after a night of travel, the war-lord intends to mount at five or six o'clock in the morning, and, attended by trumpeters and a formidable suite, ride through the streets alarming the garrison. If the wardrobe-master on duty suspects that the journey is on an errand of that kind, he exhausts every possible means of solving the mystery, and more than once have I aided the poor fellow by trying to learn from the Empress what was wanted. Sometimes, though, even her Majesty is kept in ignorance.

The wardrobeman's anxiety will be better understood when I mention that William makes it a rule to always wear the uniform of the principal regiment garrisoned in the place visited ; the attendant unable to draw from among the baggage the military dress desired would quickly find himself dropped from the salary list.

When, in addition, it is stated that a cavalry uniform, for instance, consists of fourteen distinct parts, the reader may gain an idea of the work involved by these sudden journeys, for one uniform would of course not do ; there must be three or four in reserve, and also civilian and hunting dress.

In a similar predicament to the wardrobeman is the stable-master. Will an infantry, cavalry, or artillery

horse be wanted? for his Majesty rides a different breed of animal with each body of troops. Every time information is withheld in the manner described, six horses, two of each kind, must be taken along for his Majesty, besides consignments of carriage-horses and vehicles and numerous mounts for the suite, all of which increases the cost of railway journeying enormously, for, though most of the German railways are property of the state, the Kaiser has to pay mileage like any other individual.

The imperial train generally pulls out of the station at ten o'clock at night, as the Kaiser never allows business to interfere with his own convenience, and if, for some reason or other, he wants to rise earlier than usual, he retires soon after supper to make up for time that will be lost. Furthermore, the train must proceed at the slowest possible rate, so that the "all-highest's" sleep be not disturbed.

That the saloon-train is furnished with all the luxuries imaginable—a rolling palace containing reception, dining, bed, bath and toilet rooms, kitchen, scullery, and stables—need hardly be explained; the only things lacking are accommodations for the servants, who, valet and hostler alike, must sleep in chairs or on the floor.

At five o'clock, or earlier, a cup of tea is served to the monarch, the bath and toilet follow, and then breakfast, which latter is served with much more state and with a greater variety of food than at home. So fortified and refreshed, the Kaiser and his paladins mount at dawn, and, preceded by buglers, gallop into the city "to kill the soldiers' and, incidentally, the citizens' morning sleep."

One of the imperial adjutants, whom I dare not name, as it would ruin this gentleman's chances of advancement, describes the mode of procedure at the alarming of the garrison of the fortress of Posen as follows:—

"During breakfast, and on our ride to the inner town, his Majesty talked of nothing but of the 'stupid faces' the commander and officers, suddenly roused

from sleep, would make, and drew some rather *risqué* pictures of the consternation and discomforts bound to follow the signals, so that one of our party remarked: 'These provincial petticoats will not thank your Majesty for making war on them.'

"'Pshaw!' said the Kaiser, 'what matters that? The devotion of my brave blue coats, some of whom I will aid to escape without paying their bills, will recompense me for any loss of admiration in those quarters.'

"By this time we had been admitted, after giving the parole of the day," continued my informant, "and presently our trumpeters' blasts and the sharp clang of our horses' hoofs resounded in the main street. Posen, though only half Polish, has seen so many sieges, insurrections, and kindred revolutionary doings, that warlike activity has no terror for her citizens; a *coup de main* in broad daylight would no more disconcert them, I believe, than a good-sized shower. Windows were opened and shut as we cantered along, men, women, and children in night-dresses casting hasty glances at the strange cavalcade through half-raised Venetian blinds. Now and again a military person, semi-dressed, or semi-naked if you will, drew himself up into regulation attitude, hand raised to the side of his head; one might imagine hearing his naked heels strike together. Proceeding at a rapid rate, we encountered several small troops of soldiers bound for the drill-grounds; but the Kaiser ordered them to fall behind, while their officers gave the report to the adjutants. On Wilhelm Platz the Emperor had the satisfaction of stopping two cavalry horses which, while being saddled, heard the signal and ran off to take their places in array; altogether we made an awful lot of noise and provoked more.

"Meanwhile, we had reached the principal hotel, and there, at one of the upper windows, was a well-known face, adorned by fierce blonde mustachios, peeping out between two lithe figures in white—the one a popular *coryphée* of the Berlin Royal Opera House, the other the *ingénue* of the theatre on Gendarmen Markt.

"'What do I see?' cried the Emperor. 'This

looks as if my ballet and players had preceded us to Posen.'

"'It is the first instance that these two branches of art appear on terms of *camaraderie*,' remarked Adjutant von Moltke, and everybody laughed.

"The surprised Adonis, Baron von X——, Rittmeister of the Body Hussars, was invited to the Emperor's circle at the banquet in the officers' mess that followed the parade, and his Majesty amused himself royally at his expense, as, indeed, he treated the whole expedition as a huge joke, arranged to afford him a novel entertainment."

Travelling is such a mania with the Reise-Kaiser, that, when business of state or the fact that there is nobody or nothing to visit forbids his going abroad, he occasionally spends a night in his railway carriage, stalled at Wildpark Station, only five minutes from the Neues Palais, on the plea that on the following morning he must be in Berlin at some unearthly hour.

In the early part of the summer of 1895, he indulged in this queer pastime with increasing regularity, until one night in June, when, about to drive to the station from some festivity held at the Marble Palace, the Kaiserin took courage to threaten an invasion of his bachelor quarters, which, she insisted, must possess some special attraction. As her Majesty was not quite wrong in this, William desisted from following his inclination then and for several months, his compliance being all the more ready as the Empress was in an interesting condition. But her Majesty's interference was not only justified, it was likewise well-timed, for just then there was under way a formidable conspiracy among the royal servants, who, underpaid as they are and nourishing a sneaking spirit of insurrection, had conspired among themselves to inform some member of the opposition (with a view of interpellating the Minister of Railways in the Reichstag) of the fact that his Majesty was in the habit of using a public depot for his sleeping apartment. In that way, they expected to get even with William for compelling them to

spend so many nights in their clothes. Of course the legislative body has no business to inquire into the sovereign's manner of spending his nights, but the public was doubtless very much interested in the accompanying circumstance that, when his Majesty chooses to repose at Wildpark Station, traffic is seriously interfered with in order that his sleep be not disturbed.

"Over a hundred officials and workmen stay awake to-night to facilitate the Kaiser's fad for occupying his car," said Count Eulenburg to me one evening, at the end of May, when the Kaiser was setting out for his wheeled boudoir.

"Impossible!—a hundred persons?"

"A hundred or more—the lists have gone through my hands. Reflect a moment on the work involved: Freight-trains must be side-tracked, and passenger-trains are compelled to reduce their speed, while the ordinary signals, steam-whistling and ringing of bells, have to be abandoned, and the number of employees doubled, to forestall mishaps."

If disgruntled servants had told this story to Liebknecht or Bebel, the inevitable discussion might have seriously interfered with his Majesty's enjoyment of the Wilhelm Canal opening festivities then about to take place.

CHAPTER VI

THE EMPEROR'S LOVE OF TRAVEL (*continued*)—THE COURT OF DENMARK—WILLIAM II. AND FRANCIS JOSEPH—WILLIAM II.'S DIVERSIONS AND RESTLESSNESS—THE "SONG TO ÆGIR"—THE KAISER AS SPEECH-MAKER—HIS HISTORICAL BLUNDERS.

WILLIAM stays at home when there is no one to visit, I said in the preceding chapter, and I may add that willing victims of imperial travelmania grow scarcer year by year. How well I remember the Kaiser's return from his first Northland trip in the summer of 1888, when he spoke most exultingly of his visit to Copenhagen, and how he had succeeded in wheedling King Christian and Queen Louise.

"They can be of great service to me with Alexander" (the Czar), he said, "and I promised to stay with them a couple of days every year on my way to or from Northland."

All of us around the royal board, officials and guests, looked at one another in astonishment, for the poverty of the reigning family of Denmark is notorious. Indeed, almost everybody at Court had heard the Kaiser, at one time or another, quote Field-Marshal Count Moltke's observation in one of his famous letters to his brother Adolph:

"Poor King of Denmark! The founder of a new dynasty, he began his reign by losing one-half of the realm! Sweeping reductions were inevitable in the Court and administration; indeed, it is doubtful if this state can continue to exist as an independent kingdom."

Besides, it was an open secret that the Czar, when

visiting his father-in-law, paid for his accommodation like the millionaire he was—for his and for that of all his relatives making Denmark their summer home and rejoicing in the annual family reunions. The Kaiser knew that; he had even obtained a corroboration of the stories in Stockholm, as it turned out by-and-by; was he, then, determined to become one of the Czar's pensioners, or did he not care whether he embarrassed his venerable brother of Denmark, half of whose inheritance Prussia swallowed up?

Reference to the minutes of the journey reveal the fact that at the state dinner in Castle Amalienborg, the Kaiser, answering King Christian's toast, literally said: "I submit my sincerest thanks for your Majesty's welcome, and hope that I may be permitted to visit your Majesty frequently in the same way."

It was the last toast spoken that evening, and the members of the Kaiser's suite do not know whether the implied question was honoured by an invitation in private. Certain it is, however, that his Majesty had no further occasion "to eat the Danes out of house and home," for, although the Court of Copenhagen was annually advised of his Majesty's contemplated northern trips, it always acknowledged the notification in such cold terms that any wish to follow it up by a promise to call and take pot-luck was *eo ipso* forestalled.

My mistress, in whose circle the Fredensborg family reunions were repeatedly discussed, explained her husband's continued neglect to join them by saying that the increasing volume of business made it necessary for his Majesty to pass by Copenhagen; but I have it on the authority of a high official in the Russian Embassy during Count Shuvaloff's administration, that Czar Alexander distinctly refused to be disturbed in his retreat by "that young man," while, at the same time, the Danish Minister in Berlin hinted that Queen Louise was not well enough to stand the excitement of such visits, that brought back to her all she had suffered since the events of 1864. But that economical questions have something to do with it as well as politics, cannot be

denied. The Emperor's suite, you must know, is seldom less than sixty head strong, even when he travels in semi-state. Imagine that gang, with appetites whetted by a sea-voyage, descending upon the little island Court, which, though not ashamed to exhibit its cocoa-nut matting in the royal corridors and its crazy little oil-lamps before the immensely wealthy Russians, must brush up and go to no end of expense to make as good a showing as possible before these shoddy Berliners. Besides, the Kaiser always expects that some military or naval display will be especially arranged for him.

But not only poor kings, like Christian, object to these imperial invasions; at Rome and Vienna, not to mention the small German courts, the cry, "The Prussians are coming!" is as sure of causing a panic in what is styled "highest circles" as in the nurseries of France, where the echo of 1870 to 1871 is still in use as a means of intimidation.

On February 21, 1895, the Kaiser returned in high dudgeon from Vienna, whither he had gone unexpectedly to attend the funeral of the late Archduke Albrecht. Albrecht had been a good hater of Prussia all his life, and if his ideas had prevailed twenty-seven years ago, Austria would have fallen foul of the Prussian rear and flank; only Moltke's incredible swiftness of mobilisation baulked that plan. This eventuality had been repeatedly discussed in the press, and, in view of the circumstance, Emperor Francis Joseph was loath to invite the Kaiser to the funeral. But William refused to acknowledge the tact displayed by his brother monarch. "Here," so ran his calculations as depicted in some of his remarks made before leaving—"here is an event upon which the eyes of the world will be riveted for a day at least—a pompous funeral—where one may cut an important figure as the only live war-lord; besides, many political questions call for discussion with Francis Joseph just now. Would it not be absurd to miss this opportunity for combining pleasure, pardon, spectacular display, with business?"

William rushed off to Austria pell-mell, but not

without having previously instructed the overseer of the official scribes, Herr von Tausch, the same who figured in the criminal courts in 1897, to proclaim from the house-tops that the German Emperor had magnanimously forgotten all about the late Archduke's evil intentions, and had gone to pay his imperial respects to the dead foe.

The first effect of this *fanfaronnade* was the withdrawal from the obsequies, of the dead man's brother-in-law, the Bavarian Prince Regent. Luitpold, as a near relative, had no ambition to take second rank, walking behind William. The Hofburg officials were thrown into the utmost confusion. The place of chief mourner had been reserved for Emperor Francis Joseph; now there were two sovereigns to be treated with equal distinction. So all arrangements were upset, and the Austrian monarch himself was most seriously embarrassed. However, the funeral passed off without a hitch; but William soon found that Francis Joseph, deeply chagrined at the absence of his cousin, was not in the humour to talk politics. He would neither argue the election of Faure, nor the question of the renewal of the Triple Alliance. He even refused to express an opinion on the rumours concerning Count Kalnoky's resignation, which was then imminent.

This the Emperor himself reported on coming home, blaming, at the same time, everybody but himself for the rebuffs experienced. What he did not tell (the Empress learned of it later through her brother, who had it from the Princess Philip of Coburg) was that Francis Joseph, surely the mildest and most hospitable of men, treated the Kaiser with so much coolness that his Majesty left his apartments in the Hofburg and took up his quarters with Count Philip Eulenburg, at the German Embassy, where the object of the visit was lost sight of at an informal dinner enlivened by songs and dances which hired vaudeville stars and the ambassadorial troubadour himself performed.

And that happened a year after William had called Francis Joseph, in a speech delivered at the Austrian

Navy Casino in Pola, "my best friend, with whom I am united in sincerest friendship, and who is my most loyal companion in arms." Finally, the King of Saxony had to act as peacemaker between the two Emperors.

When the news reached Berlin, in the middle of November, 1889, that Dom Pedro had been deposed, Duke Günther of Schleswig circulated a story to the effect that the Kaiser received the information with the remark: "Too bad; I had just thought of paying him a visit." The responsibility for this anecdote I must leave to his Highness.

After the bustle occasioned by his Majesty's preparations for travel, life in the Neues Palais, which is never brilliant, but often spectacular, becomes duller and more insipid than ever. Entertainments are completely abandoned, and economy is the word heard on every side. The Court and House-marshals give strict orders that expenses be cut all round; a number of the servants are shipped to Berlin, so that their board wages, to which they are entitled while in Potsdam, may be saved; only flowers from the royal gardens dare be used for decoration, while great loads are bought from different purveyors during the Kaiser's residence at home, and, finally, the expenses of the cuisine are reduced two-thirds, because the Empress, out of sheer *ennui*, falls in with the prevailing rule by taking her meals privately with the children.

All of a sudden, sometimes, his Majesty bursts anew into the midst of our humdrum existence, having left his friends abruptly, or his comtemplated business unfinished; occasionally, it is said, press criticism brings him back earlier than anticipated. Hence he employs a day or so despatching the most urgent affairs of state, and immediately sets the ball of courtly entertainments rolling. He may order a dinner of a hundred covers or more for next day, and again, while that is in progress, invite his guests, or part of them, to accompany him on a yachting expedition on the Havel lakes.

Gun-charger Riger, who, in his gold-embroidered chasseur dress, stands behind the Kaiser's chair on

festive occasions, often conveys a brief command of that kind to the House-marshal on duty in this fashion: "His Majesty's yacht *Alexandra* and so and so many auxiliary yachts must be ready at such and such an hour,"—usually at four or five, if the meal began between one and two.

To facilitate this imperial wish, telegraph, telephone, and mounted messengers must be plentifully employed in an effort to drum together officers and crew, hire vessels, and secure a band. Furthermore, the *personnel* of the coffee and tea kitchen and confectionery has to be sent to the steamer with their outfit, for each of the five meals to which their Majesties are accustomed must be served punctually under all circumstances.

Promptly at the hour named, the marshal on duty "submits" that carriages are waiting to bring their Majesties and the company to the embarking-place, and, before the vessel leaves, the official takes heart to ask his master where he commands that supper shall be served.

Maybe his Majesty answers, carelessly: "Pfauen Insel," or, "Park of the Marble Palace," "at eight."

The first is a small wooded island in the Havel, containing a sparsely-furnished royal villa that affords a certain amount of space, but little else, for the accommodation of guests. The castellan of the estate or castle selected for the invasion is now hurriedly informed, and the stable-master sets about getting ready ten or more so-called kitchen vans to transport all that is necessary: refrigerators and hot-closets, table-linen, basketfuls of silver and plate, china and crystal, wines, meats, vegetables and delicacies, lamps and candelabra, and a thousand and one accessories. All these things are under the care of certain officials and servants, and, the staff being thoroughly organised, the whole train is equipped in an incredibly short while and starts for its destination, the Court-marshal following in his carriage to superintend the arrangements on the spot (that is, if the Kaiser has not meanwhile made up his mind to go elsewhere).

Oh, the fickleness of the great! In the summers of 1895 and 1896, especially, the places of rendezvous were changed with alarming frequency, and before the cavalcade started for a certain castle or park, the men usually offered to lay wagers that upon their arrival they would find a telegram ordering supper in some other lodge or villa, or on the borders of some lake five or ten miles to the south, or east, or west, as the case might be. Once they were chased in this manner from Charlotten Hof to the Baierische Häuschen in Wildpark, and from there to the Entenfang, far out in the royal hunting-grounds. The Entenfang is a romantic spot, such as young lovers might select for a picnic; but imagine the tumult and work which the impromptu establishment of a royal table of from twenty to one hundred covers must occasion, when the nearest castle or royal villa is ten miles off. The vans had to be sent back to the Neues Palais for tables, chairs, carpets, and a little tent for the toilet, while the nearest military post furnished field cooking-apparatus, and a dozen or more horses were driven lame travelling to and fro with heavy loads. The damage caused by broken crockery, crystal, and ruined furniture also reached a high figure.

Foreign visitors at our Court frequently wonder how it is possible for one man to give employment to three hundred and fifty horses in driving and riding, as he Emperor does. The story of these whimsical excursions explains that point, for, aside from the horses needed for the service, carriages must be sent to fetch their Majesties and suite and company from some distant place, perhaps, while others are collecting the ladies and gentlemen in Potsdam and neighbourhood, or from incoming trains, who have been "commanded" to be present at supper at some place where at the time stipulated no sign of life exists.

At twelve or one o'clock in the morning, when the imperial master, his titled suite and his friends, have forgotten, in several hours' sleep, all about the forty-five minutes of entertainment that kept a small army of men, women, and beasts on the run since dinner, the

vans and carry-alls return to the palace, often awakening many a noble lord and lady who wonder that any living creature dare disturb their august slumber.

Whether they dare or not, they do. It is a way they have of getting even with "their betters."

When the Kaiser is at home, his conversation perpetually turns on the subject of future outings, and his secretaries and adjutants are kept busy scouring the papers for items that promise excuses for a visit to one place or another. As soon as an opening is discovered, the Court-marshal must find ways and means to secure on invitation for the Emperor, and to that end either the military authorities, the *Landrath* (chief of a county), or some Prince or aristocrat living in the neighbourhood, receives instructions, which in many cases are most eagerly followed, for William's presence in any place, not his capital, is a guarantee for no end of advertisement; sometimes, though, it is quite difficult to persuade the municipal authorities, these worthy men being afraid of the cost of the undertaking.

If neither cities nor country districts, neither the North German Lloyd nor the Hamburg Line, neither the shipyards nor yacht or hunting clubs at home or abroad, hold out allurements, the Kaiser, quickly resolved, *makes* opportunities for travel or display.

He observes, for instance, that it is so and so many years since the —— Regiment received an honoured flag. "Let's grant it a new set of colours," says William, and presently parades, religious ceremonies, speechifyings, dinners, and tattoos are in the air. Or, all regiments being provided with flags, his Majesty feels "graciously pleased" to bestow on one or another "ensign ribbons," an act yielding as much in the way of spectacular splendour as the other.

In contrast to the Empress, William is not a religious person, but, like her Majesty, firmly believes that godliness does very well for common people. With that idea in mind, he inaugurated his crusade for the building of churches, leaving to Auguste Victoria's initiative the task of collecting the necessary funds. For his part he

is interested only in the corner-stone-laying and the opening of such edifices.

"We have built fifteen churches in Berlin alone since 1890," said William, in the course of a dinner at the Berlin Schloss, some time ago.

"His Majesty means he drove thirty times *à la* Dumont to commencement and finishing celebrations," whispered my neighbour, the then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Baron von Marschall, imitating the persiflage of his South German home, where it is the fashion to refer to a bevy of ten girls as "twenty bosoms."

Provided nothing better offers itself, the Kaiser is even content to assist at church ceremonials of the sort described in the provinces; "they bore him awfully" says Baron von Lyncker, "but he finds opportunity for making a speech there, and a little uewspaper notoriety is likewise sure to follow. And one must be thankful for small favours in these democratic times." That the Kaiser allows no war or other monument to be unveiled without personally participating in the act, hardly requires comment.

In a preceding paragraph, I referred to the easy complaisance with which the aristocracy submits to the Kaiser's wishes. William, indeed, seems to have cowed the flower of German nobility into a condition that once prevailed in France, when the dignitaries of the crown fought among themselves as to who should have the honour to hand his Majesty a clean shirt or remove his dirty boots. Let me give one instance among many.

On October 24, 1894, the Kaiser's "Song to Ægir" was performed at a matinée in the Royal Opera House, which the Prince and Princess of Wied attended, together with their Majesties.

The Prince is a man in the fifties, belongs to one of the proudest families in Europe, and besides is the brother of the Queen of Roumania and an uncle of the Queen of Holland; yet every time the big audience waxed enthusiastic over his Majesty's alleged masterpiece, this old man with silvery hair rose respectfully

from his seat and bowed low before his nephew, keeping up the farce all through the performance without William in any way restraining him.

And this reminds me, by way of contrast, of a conversation at which I was present some time previous to that public exhibition of senile adulation.

"Tell me, honestly, who helped his Majesty compose this frightful 'Song to Ægir'?"

"State secret. Your Royal Highness must certainly excuse me this time," and Adjutant Count Moltke looked up helplessly into the beautiful eyes of the Emperor's sister.

"As my big brother remarked the other day to the Burgomaster of Thorn: 'I can be very disagreeable if need be,'" said the Princess of Meiningen. "Now, Herr Major, answer pit and pat, I command you."

"His Majesty composed the song."

"That is the official version, I know; what I am interested in, is to find out *how* he did it."

"At the piano, your Royal Highness."

"Since when does his Majesty play?"

"He has the finest ear for music, *that* your Royal Highness will not deny. He struck the keys with one finger, and, if you promise not to give me away, your humble servant had the honour of putting the all-highest's composition on paper."

"Thanks awfully," said the Princess, and, turning to her lady-in-waiting, Fräulein von Ramin, now Madame von Brochen, she added: "Not a word of this to anybody; our dear Moltke must not be punished for amusing us." And, once more addressing the adjutant, she continued with her usual mocking laugh: "I will now tell you how it was done, you innocent. The Emperor was strumming the piano with one finger, when a certain blonde giant about your size stepped behind him, and, striking the keys, gave life to a musical composition he, the giant, had half perfected in his head. The air pleased his Majesty, and he added a note here and there. And, as the thing progressed, my big brother said: 'This would be an excellent accompaniment to

Eulenburg's northern legend. Call him at once.' When the troubadour appeared, all three of you set to work on this frightful piece of clap-trap, and, as you correctly reported, the honour of putting the composition on paper fell to you as the only capable musician of the trio—*the* composition, I said, not the all-highest one."

This lively colloquy occurred a few days after the much-disputed air had been performed at a concert in honour of a deputation from the British Royal Dragoons visiting Berlin to congratulate their new chief, the Kaiser, and it gives the true story of the birth of that song. For the orchestration, it may be added, Professor Albert Becker, of Berlin, is responsible; he received the Hohenzollern Cross in acknowledgment.

Besides clearing up the "Ægir" mystery, the above affords an interesting illustration of William's mode of work. He has talents, undoubtedly, but they are creative only in giving work to others, the product passing for his own in the end. As Herren von Moltke and Philip Eulenburg are the real authors of "his" "Song to Ægir," so Professor Knackfuss, in Cassel, composes his cartoons, though being credited only with their technical execution. The late Court chaplain Frommel used to write the imperial sermons delivered with so much éclat on the deck of the yacht *Hohenzollern;* officers of the military household prepare William's lectures, and the artist Karl Saltzmann paints his landscapes and marine views.

To shield their master from the accusation of frittering away his time in useless dilettanteism, the German official press occasionally prints historic reviews purporting to show that the Hohenzollerns of all ages have been among the most gifted of mortals—authors, poets, musicians, artists. Especially to Frederick William the First's cleverness as a painter, constant reference is made, although any one acquainted with the history of the Prussian Court might be aware of the untenableness of that claim. This gentleman, the father of the great Frederick, wrote his royal signature upon a good many canvases, it is true, but few of the pictures attributed to

his brush were really his. As a matter of fact, instead of being the Apelles of the Brandenburg dynasty, its first noted painter, he started the fashion of counterfeiting, of which his son became past-master. His scheme was to employ poor artists by the year, and to let them paint daubs of all sizes and subjects. These he adorned with his name, adding a little colouring here and there into the bargain, and sold at high prices to flatterers and enemies, as the case might be, for in those days the modes of punishment at the disposal of a Majesty were manifold and curious.

A cunning knave this second King of Prussia, and his august example was not entirely lost upon his successors, as the case under consideration shows. But, in weighing the plentiful boasts of imperial achievements upon the scale of sober judgment, there is still another point to be noticed: William's daily programme—I remind the reader of Count Seckendorf's witty delineation of his Majesty's labours hour by hour—precludes in itself the undertaking of any great amount of serious work on the Kaiser's part. Having for ever one foot in the stirrup and planning new diversions before another is fairly under way, how should this alleged jack-of-all-trades find time for the literary, musical, and artistic pursuits credited to him? There are geniuses who accomplish a prodigious amount of work by turning night into day; but, with all my experience in the royal household, I am at a loss to account for the newspaper statements setting forth that now and again the Kaiser spends half, or three-quarters of the night, studying state papers or working out great projects in the interest of public concern.

In the first place, his constitutional aversion to sitting still for a considerable time is against night-work, even supposing, for argument's sake, that the day's or evening's amusements did not tire out the Kaiser so completely as to make it impossible for him to give the necessary attention to important business; moreover, his love of sleep would stand in the way. After supper, or at the conclusion of the night's

entertainment, the Kaiser invariably retires as speedily as possible, for "*Morgen weider lustig*," thinks his Majesty, with Jerome, the late King of Westphalia. And to persevere in a round of pleasures and excitement it is essential to husband one's strength.

Many will disagree with the statements made, I know. Having heard so much to the contrary, people are naturally disinclined to have their ideas upset. Still, to defend myself against accusations of inaccuracy or exaggeration, I need but quote certain notes from my diary covering the period from August, 1893, to August, 1894.

Of the three hundred and sixty-five days, the Kaiser spent away from his official residence one hundred and ninety-nine, devoting himself to the army on twenty-seven days, and employing sixteen days in duties of representation. One hundred and fifty-six days were consumed by hunting-trips, sea-journeys, and visiting.

Now to the one hundred and sixty-six days when his Majesty was "officially" at home. Seventy-seven of them were pleasantly passed in shooting, boating, yachting, or other out-door exercise in the neighbourhood of Potsdam or Berlin, while of the remaining eighty-nine days, each twenty-four hours were diversified by banquets, corsos, concerts, theatrical performances; by receptions, reviews, or speech-makings. The number of miles covered by the Kaiser either in his saloon-carriage or on board ship during the period mentioned, amounted to three-quarters of the earth's circumference.

A dozen members of our Court society were discussing the above facts, furnished to settle a bet between Princess Frederick Leopold and her brother, Duke Günther, at a musicale given by the widow of the Red Prince in her palace on Leipziger Platz, when Princess Aribert of Anhalt, a sprightly young Englishwoman, remarked: "Granted his Majesty cannot ply the fourteen trades and arts imputed by some historians to Peter the Great, on one will gainsay that he is a brilliant speaker and an adept in military science."

"Of his rhetorical qualities," replied our graceful hostess, who at that time had special reasons for quarrelling with her grand-nephew, "foreigners, even those understanding German as well as you, my dear, can hardly form a proper estimate. For myself, I think the Kaiser's speeches neither distinguished for elegance of diction nor for originality. The most offensive sameness pervades them, and not infrequently they abound in misstatements."

I could have furnished her Royal Highness at least one very good reason for the faults pointed out: these speeches are of the Kaiser's own making.

Only very rarely will his Majesty take the trouble to jot down minutes, as he did with the address to the recruits mentioned in another chapter, and even then it is done more to assist memory in following out a certain line of thought, than to retain dates and figures. Moreover, I doubt that he thinks it necessary to do so. A person who, relying merely upon his musical ear, and without having had instruction in singing, or being able to play an instrument, gets up in a stately gathering to sing a ballad abounding in difficult passages, is certainly the quintessence of self-reliance.

And that is exactly what William did at Castle Schlitz, in May, 1894, with Count Goertz as accompanist, the boldness of the exploit before an audience distinguished for artistic accomplishments being none the less pronounced on account of the fact that the air was alleged to be his own composition.

Of the performance, Countess Goertz spoke to the Empress in most enthusiastic terms; but, to quote William, "her Ladyship is a woman so beautiful that to expect sense from her would be hoggish."

That on the same occasion his Majesty acquitted himself quite well as *Kapellmeister*, conducting the band, a military one, which had been thoroughly drilled in performing the "Song to Ægir," is not astonishing. With his ear for music and a little attention to technique, it would have been difficult, indeed, to lead so perfect an orchestra into blunders when every man knew that

his slightest mistake would be followed by professional disgrace.

Some months after the exploit in Schlitz, his Majesty and a great number of friends were hunting near Castle Letzlingen, the band of the Saltzwedel Lancers furnishing the table-music. At that time, the official papers reported: "The Kaiser again proved his eminent musical talent by conducting the grand march from 'Aida.'" One of the party, General von Haenisch, however, tells me that this is not true. The Kaiser took up the baton to lead the "Hohenfriedberger" and Count Moltke's "Rider's March," compositions of quite a different calibre to Verdi's great work, and which, besides, the band could have played in the dark and with eyes closed.

Much as one might be inclined to look upon this sort of coxcombry as a harmless affectation liable to wear off in the course of time, its real purport is too glaring to be overlooked; this parading with plumes borrowed and stolen, the many bids for popular applause through newspaper adulation smacking of the methods of the press agent, William's public lecturing and preaching, his coquetting with the stage and letters,—all is but part of a system carefully pieced together to uphold the pretence of imperial omniscience and omnipotence.

"As to the Socialists, leave them to me; that's what I told Bismarck a dozen times," said the Kaiser at supper on May 14, 1889, after the famous audience granted by him to a party of strikers; "I will settle them single-handed." And more than eight years later, toward the end of July, 1897, when he was on his way home from Norway, he kept the wires hot for three days, demanding Miquel, Prince Hohenlohe, and other friends to arrange for him a meeting with Bismarck, that he might ask the ex-Chancellor's advice concerning the re-introduction of the old Bismarckian Socialistic laws, which the government allowed to pass out of existence after the first Chancellor's dismissal. And as in 1889 and 1890 the whole palace was moved to sympathise with the poor labouring man, who needed enlightenment and justice such as William alone knew how to provide and

administer (perish the thought that the Iron Chancellor ever possessed the slightest aptitude for dealing with the labour question!), so we were recently drilled to return to the abandoned maxims and help the Kaiser eat his own words,—a practice he indulges in so frequently that I think his memory is becoming defective, as otherwise his inordinate vanity would never permit him to acknowledge defeat.

To return to the observations of Princess Frederick Charles. There is, among the numberless speeches and sayings reported of the Kaiser, not one pithy remark that has become a by-word in every-day speech or in letters. In all this dreary wilderness of imperial verbosity, we find no *mot* that outlived the hour of its birth, and the Kaiser's observations, as a general thing, are too commonplace and insignificant even to permit dressing up. Other important persons are *made* to say clever things, often without their knowledge or consent, but William's friends and admirers scour his speeches vainly for a peg upon which to hang some witticism, or some flash of genius that might eventually be credited to the royal tattler. The Emperor, who claims to be a student of the older French literature, probably got far enough in Rivarol to learn that "it is an immense advantage to have never said anything." The sentence following, namely: "but one should not abuse it," he must have overlooked, for he certainly *does* abuse the privilege. And in a twofold manner too: he keeps on saying nothing, and misquotes history at the same time. I have not kept a minute account of the missives, but, if memory serves me right, I should say that fully one-third of the mysterious anonymous letters that caused the great Court scandal of which I will speak presently, contained caustic references to the Kaiser's assassination of historical facts.

Thus, during the Christmas season of 1894, her Majesty's holiday humour was seriously disturbed by an epistle hauling the Kaiser over the coals for a speech he had made in Kiel, at the swearing-in of recruits, and which referred to the battle of Vercella (101 B.C.) as having been fought "between Germans and Romans"

(mistake No. 1), and wherein "the Romans were vanquished" (mistake No. 2) "by the enemy's superior valour" (mistake No. 3).

After pointing out half-a-dozen other errors, the writer of the anonymous note, doubtless a woman, suggested that Auguste Victoria buy her husband a small reference-library; at the same time the correspondent thanked "William-the-Sudden" for having garbled history in order to pay homage to the arms of ancient France, "for," said this writer, "the barbaric tribe which opposed the Romans at Vercella were not Germans, but Cimbri, or Gauls; that is, they belonged to the same family as the French of to-day." Similar anonymous notes addressed to her Majesty emptied the vials of sarcasm over the composer of the "Song to Ægir," which latter, it was pointed out, was not a god of the sea, but a miserable landlubber, who never had so much as a sniff of the ocean.

The Empress used to turn over these epistles to her husband, with an aching heart; but if her Majesty, like most of her friends, hoped that these missives would make William more careful in the future, her expectations were not realised, for the Kaiser goes bravely on blundering and exposing himself to ridicule. So he improvised, at the unveiling of the Kaiser Wilhelm monument in Cologne, in July, 1897, an appeal for the enlargement of the navy, taking his text from "the figure of the ancient sea-god Ægir embellishing a medallion at the foot of this proud statue."

"It happened, however, that the image referred to did not represent Ægir, but "Father Rhine," who resembles his heathen colleague in everything save the bunches of grapes that rest upon his locks. Of course, in the universal hilarity provoked by this *quid pro quo*, the Emperor's appeal went for naught.

That young English Princess whom we met in the palace on Leipziger Platz brought up the question of the Kaiser's singular adeptness for the military, most inopportunely. It is in bad taste to speak of the delinquent in the hangman's house. The widow of the Red

Prince, greatest of Hohenzollern strategists since the Seven Years' War, did not cite this truism to her young relative; but the list of military blunders she proceeded to lay at the war-lord's door proved that she had the proverb in mind.

"Field-marshal Count Blumenthal," she said, "who, as chief of the Crown Prince's staff in the wars of 1866 and 1870, plucked the laurels that made the Kaiser's father appear almost as great a general as my own husband—Blumenthal used to complain that he was ever obliged to prod Frederick to action. In war, the man of ripe and ready judgment is the most successful; but the late Emperor was slow at thinking, and even more dilatory when he came to act.

"With his son (William II.), just the opposite holds good. If that young man has ever been able to resist a sudden impulse to any deed, no one in or out of his family has heard of it. Some years ago he made his wife chief of the Pasewalk Cuirassiers, and designed a uniform for her. As commander of this crack regiment, Auguste Victoria is entitled to the insignia of a general; but the Emperor, unthinking as he is, bestowed upon her lieutenant's epaulettes. Think of it—a lieutenant leading a regiment before the war-lord in parade, a lieutenant presiding at the state banquets in the officers' mess! On another occasion, when the Russian craze had hold of him, he issued an order compelling the officers of the General Staff to attend desk-work in riding-boots. They did so for a day or two; but, finding it impossible to continue their studies in this heavy accoutrement, combined among themselves to disobey the command and resume ordinary foot-gear.

"But the most thoughtless of all his military blunders was his cabinet order creating your Highness's grandmother" (and the old Princess bowed with a mock courtesy toward the Englishwoman), "Queen Victoria, Chief of the First Dragoons."

"Young Mrs. Aribert," as Louise of Anhalt is familiarly called at Court, started up, and seemed to be struggling for words.

"Tut, tut!" appeased her Royal Highness the little fire-brand, placing one hand on Louise's knee, "no disrespect to her Majesty, I assure you. The stupidity was all on my grand-nephew's part. He named the First-Dragoons 'Queen of England Dragoons' just one hundred and eighty-two years, less two months and twenty-nine days, after the union between England and Scotland went into effect and the realm became officially known as Great Britain."

Everybody in the room sat speechless for a while, until Princess Aribert said, half-pleadingly: "But, dear aunt, the change in the nomenclature that eventually had to be made caused no great havoc, I trust."

"Oh, no!" replied the Princess, "his Majesty did not suffer the least inconvenience on account of that error; but the nation who had to pay double for the initials attached to the shoulder-straps and on the helmets doubtless felt greatly edified by the blunder, and so did the officers who for similar reasons were several thousand marks out of pocket."

CHAPTER VII

THE KAISER'S AMUSEMENTS—THE MENZEL FESTIVAL

BOTH Majesties, as mentioned in a previous chapter, being indifferent talkers, after-dinner entertainments at the Prussian Court are not of a very lofty sort ; indeed, I am not stretching the point when I say that *ennui* begins to hang heavily upon all present in the gilded *salons* as soon as the coffee is brought in, unless the Kaiser happens to lecture, or chooses to exhaust his stock of humorous remarks ; in that event it becomes every one's duty to appear, at least, interested and edified.

To diversify things a bit, we frequently arrange "rebus competitions," a form of amusement in which the simple-minded Empress takes great delight, while the Kaiser, who not only tolerates the "twin sister of charade" in his own house, but has introduced the game into the army officers' casinos, takes active part in the sport either for the purpose of drawing attention to some smart idea that has entered his head, or merely for the sake of hearing himself talk.

Whether, as Princess Charlotte suspects, it was owing to the fact that she is known to "hate rebuses," or whether it was intended as a tribute to her fame as a wit, I do not know ; but the future Duchess of Meiningen was, until quite recently, forced to contribute more often to the pictorial pastime of the Court than any other member of the royal family or the household.

Now it happened, at an evening reception at the Berlin Schloss, in the winter of 1896, that her Highness was called away from an animated conversation she was carrying on with half-a-dozen young officers. She

responded languidly and with ill-grace, and, turning to me, whispered:

"I will teach them a lesson to-night. Their Majesties ought to know better than to draw me into any such sewing-society frolic. Ah, yes," she added, changing her tone, "I came prepared for the ordeal, but had no idea that the audience would include his Majesty. I warn you, brother, that one of your wondrous ideals may be shattered, if you insist upon the exploitation of my poor riddle."

"Never mind, Lottchen, if you amuse us, all shall be forgiven."

"Then send for the copy of the *Journal Amusant* which I saw on your desk."

The lively boulevard sheet which contained a grotesque review of the *salon* was brought in, together with a number of scissors that had likewise been ordered, and her Royal Highness instructed several of her uniformed friends to cut out certain pictures, which she pasted on a sheet of white paper, adding one or two pencil sketches with her own hand.

"Here we have the enigmatical representation of one of the most interesting figures in history," she began, in the voice of an auctioneer. "You all know the person. One of our greatest poets has immortalised the subject in a stirring drama, while the figures in the rebus are all taken from the epitaph erected to the person's memory by a fine English wit."

Their Majesties, the Princesses and Princes, and all the lords and ladies crowded around the table, greeting her Royal Highness's words with rounds of applause.

"But what do these caricatures stand for?" asked the Kaiserin, inclining her fair head toward the array of printed and hand-drawn images.

"At your Majesty's command," courtesied Princess Charlotte, and, taking up her fan, the sprightly young woman pointed out each figure, labelling them in succession as follows: "Here we have a man-at-arms or woman-at-arms (who would know the difference?); secondly, the image of a saint; thirdly, that of a witch;

fourthly, that of a lusty young fellow; fifthly, that of a sweet maiden; sixthly, that of a harlot; No. 7, the periwig of a judge, indicating the law; No. 8, the emblem of the Republic; No. 9, the Archangel Gabriel alarming the garrisons of the world on judgment-day."

Everybody set to guessing, and everybody was highly astonished when, in the end, a correct answer not forthcoming, her royal Highness announced the solution of the rebus: Joan of Arc.

"Clever, very clever!" cried the Emperor; "it is a fact that the sex of the reputed heroine has been in doubt."

"I have read somewhere that this virgin was blessed with several children," remarked the Duke of Schleswig dryly.

"But what has this type of a *cocotte* to do with the story?" And her Majesty indicated one of the *Journal Amusant* sketches.

"If you will let me quote an epitaph from 'Historical Rarities,' to which I alluded, the connection will become clear at once."

"Provided it is not too, too——" lisped the Empress, who dreads her sister-in-law's devil-may-care spirits; but the Kaiser, anxious to hear the rest, told Lottchen to proceed, which she did with evident relish. These were the lines quoted:

"Here lies *Joan* of *Arc*; the which
Some count *saint*, and some count witch;
Some count *man*, and something *more*;
Some count *maid*, and some a *w*——;
Her *life's* in question, wrong or right;
Her *death's* in doubt by laws or might.
Oh, innocence! take heed of it,
How thou, too, near to guilt doth sit.
(Meantime, *France* a wonder saw:
A woman rule, 'gainst Salic law!)
But, reader, be content to stay
Thy censure till the judgment-day;
Then shalt thou know, and not before,
Whether *saint*, *witch*, *man*, *maid*, or *w*——."

His Majesty never proposed the game at his own

house after this, at least not when the Princess of Meiningen was in the party.

"We must draw the line somewhere; she demoralises our young officers," says the Empress. And "I don't care if I do; virtue in a soldier is a word void of sense," is Princess Charlotte's merry rejoinder.

Countess Wartensleben, a descendant of the lady of that name who became famous as *maîtresse en titre* of the first King of Prussia, tells me another rebus in which the Emperor figured.

It appears that his Majesty, at the conclusion of a banquet arranged in his honour by the officers of the Body Cuirassiers, in Breslau (September 11, 1890), proposed his favourite means for killing time, and forthwith constructed the following rebus:

It was too deep for the "talent" present—some fifty or sixty officers—and finally the Emperor condescended to explain the mystery.

"Why, it means: Verdict by Emperor William" (the joke hinges upon the similarity of the German words *Uhrtheil*, that is, part of a clock, viz., the pendulum, and *Urtheil*, viz., verdict).

All applauded wildly, all except one; instead of admiration, the handsome features of Rittmeister Count Wartensleben exhibited traces of a sneer.

"You have a different solution, Count," exclaimed William; "I see it in your face."

"I had one in mind, your Majesty; but, after the Kaiser has spoken, my poor explanation cannot be of the least account."

"Still, I must have it. Speak up."

"I beg your Majesty to absolve me from that duty."

"I command you to proceed."

Wartensleben bit his lips. "As your Majesty knows, I am a Mecklenburger," he said; "I learned my Fritz Reuter by heart. The rebus reminds me of a passage in 'Durchleuchting,'—'He goes this way, he goes that way.'"

Ominous silence fell upon the assemblage after this blunt speech. "My husband said that you could hear the Colonel shake in his boots," reported Madame von Wartensleben when she described the scene to me. Luckily the Kaiser chose to treat the matter as a joke. "If that is to be an allusion to my title of Reise-Kaiser, yours is not a bad idea," he said, gathered up his drawing and threw it under the table.

"He goes this way, he goes that way"—an animated pendulum swinging freely under the action of a mind that rambles more or less incoherently from one topic to another, its ideas overthrowing each other—this Wartensleben (or his Reuter) has a clearer notion of the Kaiser's character than all the rest of his critics.

Princess Frederick Charles's caustic remarks, quoted in another chapter, have acquainted us with some of the more serious consequences of William's unbridled impetuosity; here follow some examples of less importance, that, at the same time, are more pleasant to contemplate.

In the middle of February, 1892, when the Kaiser held Court in the Berlin Schloss, as usual in winter, I was about to read the newspapers to her Majesty one fine morning when, unfolding the parcel of our daily literary allowance, I came across a copy of the *Berliner Kleines Journal*—organ of *ces dames*, that, of course, is strictly tabooed in the imperial apartments; somebody had smuggled this sheet into Auguste Victoria's sanctum doubtless for a well-defined purpose. Among the society notes was a marked paragraph, which at once attracted

her Majesty's attention, and she ordered me to read it before I had time to ascertain its contents.

It turned out to be a story connecting the name of the Emperor's adjutant, Herr von Huelsen, with that of the only daughter of General von Lucadou as a matrimonial possibility.

"Incredible!" cried the Empress; "Herr von Huelsen may be a Count some day, and that young woman's mother is descended from a French tailor's family."

"A very rich tailor's, though," suggested Fräulein von Gersdorff.

"Very likely," said the Empress, somewhat piqued, "considering the prices these Paris *modistes* charge." Then, turning to me, her Majesty continued: "Be good enough to take the paper to his Majesty's study, and place it on his desk, so he may find it upon his return. This scandal must be nipped in the bud."

When I reached the imperial antechamber, the Kaiser had just come in from parade, and, observing the paper I had in my hand, inquired, in his customary impulsive style, what it meant?

"My all-highest mistress desired me to put the *Kleines Journal* upon your Majesty's desk. It contains a reference to Herr von Huelsen."

"To Huelsen? Let me see." After reading the first line or two, he turned to the chasseur, who was standing at the door waiting to relieve him of his riding-boots and heavy sabre. "Fetch Adjutant von Huelsen at once."

I was about to withdraw, but the Emperor stopped me. "Come into my room for a moment," he said, in his most gracious style. "You shall be present during Huelsen's examination, and then report to her Majesty."

The Kaiser sat down upon the sofa, and studied the paragraph word for word. Presently, Major von Huelsen came to ascertain the master's pleasure.

"Why don't you marry Fräulein von Lucadou?" said the Kaiser, looking up from the paper with a smile that expressed good-natured surprise. "You have good uses for her money, I should reckon, and in this case

I promise to say, with my ancient colleague, '*Non olet.*'"

"Begging your Majesty's pardon, I cannot marry that young lady."

"And why not, if I approve of the match?"

Von Huelsen reddened as he answered, with a side glance at me: "Her mother is up in arms against me; your Majesty remembers that little affair with the actress Meyer?"

"I do, of course; but the old woman must not raise objections on that account, which gave my Body Hussars a most dashing private. Tell me, honestly, do you want the girl?"

"Your Majesty," said the Major, with spirit, "I would marry a negress if my Emperor approved of it."

"That white slave shall be in your arms this very day, my word on it." And, addressing me, his Majesty continued: "Pray, Countess, inform her Majesty that everything has been arranged satisfactorily, and that she must prepare for an early wedding banquet in Bellevue Strasse."

Twenty minutes later the Kaiser ascended the stairs leading to General von Lucadou's *bel étage*, his chasseur, carrying a beautiful bouquet of white roses, following.

As it happened, Fräulein von Lucadou was celebrating her birthday and the splendid residence was *en fête;* but, preparations for an influx of guests notwithstanding, the Emperor's unannounced visit threw the big household into confusion—a condition most favourable to his Majesty's purpose. To begin with, he congratulated Fräulein von Lucadou before the assembled guests on her betrothal to his adjutant, and then drew the "*Generalin*" into a corner to extol to her the virtues of her future son-in-law.

"But," gasped the old lady, in whose bosom pride and anger fought for supremacy, "our daughter has not my consent. In fact, your Majesty's congratulations are based upon a false presumption. Even the General has not seriously considered Herr von Huelsen's wooing."

"Pshaw! the General will obey orders every time,"

bristled up his Majesty; "and as for you, *gnädige Frau*, I hope you will waive your objections when I tell you that Huelsen is just the man for your daughter."

Of course, Madame von Lucadou had to give in, and soon afterward the wedding was celebrated with great pomp, the Kaiser and Kaiserin, by their presence, lending additional splendour to the ceremonies and the banquet.

In this case, as in most other unimportant issues, where the fascination of the imperial name holds good, or where an "all-highest command" addressed to official or semi-official persons, is law, the Kaiser gained his point, and for weeks afterward spoke exultingly of his "taming of the shrew," for as such, Madame *la Générale* has a well-deserved reputation. As for Herr von Huelsen, though the Emperor's interference gained him a rich and handsome wife, his troubles had only begun. His mother-in-law, *née* Sehstern-Pauli, with whom the Lucadou fortune originated, gave to the young couple a beautiful residence adjoining her own palace, furnishing it magnificently; but as, at the same time, she insisted upon staying with her daughter from early morning till late at night, this splendid home soon resembled a very warm place in Herr von Huelsen's eyes,—the "hottest on or under the earth," he assured me in a burst of confidence.

"Tell the Kaiser of the wretchedness his *Schadchen*-[1] industry carried in its wake—he must take pity on his favourite," I advised the disconsolate Benedict.

"Not for a million, your Ladyship; he is capable of driving *stante pede* to Bellevue Strasse to demand an explanation."

However, the story of poor von Huelsen's sorrows finally reached the Emperor's ears, and he sent his adjutant to Vienna as military plenipotentiary, after first conferring upon him the title and name of Count Haeseler, which had become extinct by the death of the adjutant's maternal grandfather, the last of the noble house.

[1] Professional match-maker.

A great many diplomatic appointments are made in that fashion under William II., as will be shown in the chapter devoted to the Kaiser and his personal friends. A whim, a word, a woman that is not even "well born," according to ultra-German notions—these three W's suffice to raise anybody, though he may be a nobody, to a position of international importance in the German Empire of to-day.

Not long ago I was reading to their Majesties from the collection of letters which the Duchess of Orleans, Princess Palatine, addressed to Queen Charlotte of Prussia at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and to which I alluded in a previous chapter.

"I know of many great events that historians have attributed to policy or ambition, but which originated from most insignificant trifles," said the confidante of Louis XIV. in one of her long, gossipy epistles. "Louis, for instance, retired from the present war against Holland solely for the purpose of returning to that old *Zottel* (demirep) of a Montespan and to pursue once more his nightly revels in her foul embraces."

The Empress shuddered, and told me never again to read from "Madame's" letters at random, as I had been doing under orders previously given; "Herr von der Knesebeck will make extracts and selections from the Duchess's writings for future use," she said, beaming sweetly on the pious chamberlain.

"I cannot conceive your object in wishing for an abridged edition of these letters," remarked the Kaiser, who seemed to be annoyed at the idea; "the Duchess had certainly the grand airs of one born in the purple, though her language is that of the period—blunt, even coarse at times. Still, with all that, her letters must be read in their entirety. A God-fearing censor, such as your Knesebeck here, would probably have eliminated the passage we just heard, though it is one of the grandest and most characteristic in her hundred or more letters in the Potsdam and Charlottenburg archives.

"The Duchess takes pains to show that the morals of the French Court are distasteful to her; she rails

against the King's mistress, she even seems to deplore the abrupt ending of the hostilities, but has not one word of criticism for the King's Majesty. Reverently and silently she acquiesces in the all-highest decision: the King pleased to do a certain thing, therefore it behoves the subject to submit to his will in silence. That is as it should be. This one paragraph is worth whole volumes of theoretical teachings on the doctrine of Kingship by the grace of God. If its general contents did not make it unfit for such use, I would have it inserted in all the Readers and similar school-books."

The Menzel festival in Sans Souci (June, 1895) was likewise arranged by the Kaiser on the spur of the moment. During a conversation dealing with the artist's forthcoming eightieth birthday, somebody had remarked upon the treatment Menzel suffered at the hands of Frederick William IV.'s Court-marshal, the late Count Keller, who did not even deign to answer his request when Menzel asked to be allowed to see Frederick the Great's historical Music Room by candle-light previous to putting the finishing touches to his celebrated painting, "The Flute Concert at Sans Souci."

"Maybe he was frightened at the prospect of furnishing a couple of dozen wax candles," sneered the Duke of Schleswig.

"More likely he knew nothing of Menzel's growing reputation," suggested Vegas, the sculptor.

The Emperor overheard the last words, and joined her Majesty, who was holding *petit cercle* in the *Tassen Zimmer*.

"Are you prepared to say that my grand-uncle's chief marshal failed to recognise the genius of the foremost Hohenzollern painter?" he asked sharply.

"I would not like to libel a dead man," answered Vegas, "but appearances are certainly against the Count. I have it from Menzel's own lips that the Court-marshal refused him all and every assistance when he was painting his scenes of life in Sans Souci. The rooms of the château were accessible to him only

to the same extent as to any other paying visitor or the hordes of foreign tourists, and he had to make his sketches piecemeal, gathering corroborative and additional material in museums and picture-galleries."

Quick as a flash the Kaiser turned to Count Eulenburg. "I shall repay the debt Prussia owes to Menzel," he spoke, not without declamatory effort. "We will have the representation of the Sans Souci flute concert three days hence. Your programme is to be ready to-morrow morning at ten. Menzel, mind you, must know nothing of this; merely command him to attend us at the Schloss at supper and a musical evening." And, turning round, he said to her Majesty: "You will impersonate Princess Amalia, and you, Kessel" (Adjutant von Kessel, then Commander of the First Guards), "engage all your tallest and best-looking officers to enact the great King's military household."

Again the Kaiser addressed Count Eulenburg: "Be sure to have the best artists of the Royal Orchestra perform Frederick the Great's compositions, and let Joachim be engaged for the occasion." Saying this, he took her Majesty's arm, and, bidding his guests and the Court a hasty good-night, strode out of the apartment.

Count Eulenburg had scarcely opened his mouth to pronounce the usual phrase: "Ladies and gentlemen, their Majesties have no further commands for you to-night," when Countess Brockdorff and myself were summoned to the Kaiserin's dressing-room. Her Majesty was pacing the floor. "Help me think!" she cried; "where shall I get a costume in so short a time? Even if we telegraph to Vienna this very hour, the dress could not be finished and reach here in due season."

I found it difficult to remain patient with my mistress. "As the miller pointed out to Frederick the Great, that there is a Chancellor's Court in Berlin, so I might suggest to your Imperial Majesty that the capital affords some very respectable costumers, and that the satin and velvet necessary for the over and under dress can be procured at any shop Unter den Linden," I remarked.

"Her Ladyship is right," said Countess Brockdorff,

"but"—this malicious woman would sooner think of flying than praise somebody without a "but" to offset her own note of approval—"but, as you know, the Kaiser desires her Majesty to represent a historical personage noted for her fondness of silver and gold embroidery. The under-dress and the train of the costume must be richly ornamented. How will you accomplish this in so short a time?"

"With her Majesty's permission," I answered, "I will once more cite an example from Prussian history. When the victorious King ordered the ceremony of swearing allegiance in Breslau at twelve hours' notice, the only cloth of state on hand for covering the throne and canopy was of the Austrian variety; that is, sprinkled with two-headed eagles. 'Never mind,' said the King, 'cut out one head and the Prussian bird of prey is ready.' So we might overhaul her Majesty's chests of laces and precious embroideries and, I am sure, obtain material enough for a dozen costumes, and —without cutting off anybody's head," I could not constrain myself to add.

My advice was followed on the spot, and the Kaiserin personally accompanied Countess Brockdorff and myself to the wardrobe-rooms, while next morning, by the earliest train, the grand-mistress and Frau Gleim repaired to Berlin to continue the investigation in the Schloss. On the evening of the *fête* day, the Empress herself admitted that my over-confidence had been justified by the results attained.

To tell the truth, Auguste Victoria never looked better than in the picturesque costume of the royal Abbess of Quedlinburg, though she is really the last person in the world resembling Amalia, who, at the period depicted, "was as beautiful as an angel, and the most joyous and affable King's daughter ever described in old patrician literature." Her Majesty's dress consisted of a petticoat of sea-green satin, richly ornamented with silver lace of antique pattern, and an overdress of dark velvet embroidered with gold and set with precious stones. On her powdered hair, amplified by one of

Herr Adeljana, the Viennese coiffeur's, most successful "creations," sat a jaunty three-cornered hat, having a blazing aigrette of large diamonds in front, the identical cluster of white stones which figured at the great Napoleon's coronation, and which he lost, together with his entire equipage, in the battle of Waterloo.

In her ears her Majesty wore pearl ornaments representing a small bunch of cherries. Like the aigrette, they are Crown property, and that Auguste Victoria thought well enough of the jewels to rescue them from oblivion for this occasion was certainly most appropriate.

Make a note of it, thou up-to-date reader, historic romance is not dead, as some of our novelists would fain make us believe; that graceful offspring of love and lore merely slumbers in a moth-proof cedar chest, and, on rare occasions, steps gaily forward to recall to the minds of the initiated memories of ancient splendour.

Know, then, that those priceless gems in her Majesty's ears belonged at one time to the great Frederick's lovely mistress, La Barbarina, as Rosalba Carriera's famous pastel of the dancer in the Dresden gallery, and furthermore a large painting which hung for nearly a century and a half in a water-closet of the grey Schloss on the Spree, prove. According to an old-time inventory, the canvas had been placed in that unseemly environment by all-highest order, to "the *Frauenzimmer's* lasting shame," when, in 1748, King and ballerina quarrelled. And that despicable mode of punishment, worthy of a century that tolerated the most loathsome personal uncleanliness while striving for artistic perfection, remained in force until the Schloss was partly rebuilt by the present Kaiser. The canvas, a work of Vanloo, is now stored with a lot of rubbish in Castle Bellevue, in the Thiergarten.

Barbarina's jewels in the Prussian Crown treasury. How they got there would certainly be a most interesting question to solve. Was it the warrior-Leander's "good pleasure" to tie a string to his presents, or did

Barbarina share the fate of Voltaire after dismissal, and she was overtaken on the road to the frontier by Prussian hussars (as the French philosopher was on his way to Switzerland) and robbed of the negotiable souvenirs of royal favour?

The Kaiser himself came to inspect our masquerade before we entered upon our short drive to Sans Souci. All the ladies wore costumes resembling that of her Majesty — flowered silk petticoats, velvet overdresses puffed up at the hips, coloured silk stockings, and satin slippers with high, red heels *à la* Duval and silver buckles; also towering coiffures set off by ostrich-tips. In this fetching dress, as a lady of the Court, Countess von Bassewitz, looked so uncommonly well that the Kaiser, who is not used to such surprises in his wife's *entourage*, let his eyes rest upon her graceful figure and pretty face for quite a while, until her Majesty impatiently proposed a hurried departure.

The Kaiser wore the cuirassier uniform of the great Frederick's period, a highly ornamented dress that suited the war-lord, who was painted and powdered to perfection, extremely well, especially as Wellington boots, a very becoming wig, and his strange head-gear really and seemingly added to his figure, while his usually stern face beamed pleasantly under the powder and rouge, laid on by expert hands.

At the grand portals of Sans Souci their Majesties were ceremoniously received by Colonel von Kessel, who was uniformed like the Emperor and had under his command a company of giant grenadiers clad in the old-time blue and red coats, long white leggings reaching above the knees, and gilded tin helmets backed with scarlet on powdered wigs.

The scene of Menzel's picture, Frederick's Music Room, is the second apartment on the right after the dining-hall, which forms the centre of the château.

We found it brilliantly lit up with wax candles, too luminous to represent the original of the masterpiece, and certainly far more resplendent with light than the miserly King would have permitted, of whom it is

reported that he compelled his Queen and the Queen-Mother to await his coming in the White Hall of the Berlin Schloss previous to the great state functions, by the light of a single taper. Not until Frederick himself appeared among the guests and officials, durst the candles on the chandeliers and candelabra be lit.

Like other members of the Court and Society, I had heard a great deal of William's predilection for stage management, but never had had occasion to witness the exercises of this particular gift on the Kaiser's part. Imagine my surprise when, suddenly, I found myself in the midst of a full-dress rehearsal!

In one corner of the room, huddled together like a flock of frightened sheep, stood the artists engaged for the occasion. All wore the eighteenth-century Court costume—long-skirted vests and silk or velvet coats, coloured satin breeches, buckled shoes, and imposing *allongé perruques*.

"Attention!" cried the Kaiser, and he began to call out their names without taking the trouble to affix the customary "Herr," while an imperious gesture of his gloved hand assigned each man to his post.

At the historic grand piano, which was once enlivened by the slender fingers of Princess Amalia, perhaps the greatest virtuoso of her time, a middle-aged artist was placed, whose make-up resembled the features of Philip Emanuel Bach, Frederick's accompanist. To his right the Kaiser posted a viola-player, representing Franz Benda of by-gone days, and behind them came two performers on the violoncello, and finally two violinists.

The great King was impersonated by a small, thin man of noble countenance, who held between his fingers an exact counterpart of Frederick's favourite flute.

Having placed these gentlemen in position, the Kaiser had a copy of Menzel's painting brought in, and pointed out the figure each represented. "Now, first violin," rang out his drill-ground voice, "give more attention to holding your head!" "The piano-player must turn his face a little sideways!" "The 'cellists must bend down a bit!"

"That is right; now all remember that you are expecting your cue from the royal soloist."

Turning from the musicians, his Majesty called out: "Where are Quanz" (Frederick's music-teacher), "Graun" (the composer), "and Maupertuis?"

Three actors from the royal play-house responded.

"You have studied your parts?" said the Kaiser inquiringly; "well, then, proceed to your various corners, and do not take notice of any one in the room. Play your parts as if you stood on a real stage, with the Kaiser in his box."

In the same manner the ladies of the Court were ordered about, and the Empress herself did not fare better.

"Countess Bassewitz!" shouted the royal stage-manager, as if he were addressing a *coryphée*, "please remember that the Margravine of Baireuth, whom you have the honour to represent, was not only noted for beauty and grace, but also for her truly royal airs."

Her little Ladyship blushed and moved uneasily on the red silk sofa where she sat with Countess Camas, whom Frederick used to call his *chère maman.*

Behind the chair of Madame von Camas, the Kaiser put an officer, a somewhat awkward young man, who had to change his position half a dozen times before it suited his Majesty, and then came the most difficult task of all—the placing of the Empress.

We ladies had studied the part of Princess Amalia with her Majesty incessantly for the last twenty-four hours, but Auguste Victoria seemed utterly unable to enter into the spirit of the tableau. Seeing her failure, she affected physical reasons for her nervousness, while everybody saw with regret that the Kaiser's imperious manner had completely disconcerted the royal lady. In his Majesty's eyes this novice was the least satisfactory of all; she neither "understood how to hold a fan, nor how to look interested," and the scene was becoming very painful, when, to everybody's relief, House-marshal Baron von Lyncker appeared and announced that Professor Menzel's carriage was approaching. Thereupon

the Emperor left at once to assume his character as Frederick the Great's Adjutant-General in the vestibule. We all breathed freer now, especially as Herr von Lyncker, the stage-manager—substitute, made us feel quite easy in our parts by a few words of approval.

Menzel had meanwhile alighted at the grand entrance, and ascended the stairs, wondering at the display of old-time military. The little old man wore shabby evening dress, and an overcoat over his arm, and his surprise knew no bounds when Colonel von Kessel stepped forward to welcome him with a ceremonious speech. When, however, von Kessel having "spoken his piece," the Kaiser himself marched up solemnly in his strange uniform, hat in hand, the artist perceived at once that he was to be the victim of an ovation and with much dignity submitted to the ordeal. For such it turned out to be. William, unknown to all except the master of ceremony, had imitated his ancestor in one more respect, and there was no Voltaire to wash *this* King of Prussia's "dirty linen."

As Prince Bismarck put it (I owe the anecdote to the great Chancellor's physician and confidant, Dr. Schwenninger), "he stepped into the lowest department of literature, occasional poetry, and bombarded the helpless master with forty stanzas of alleged verse in which the deeds of Prussia's kings and the masterpieces that commemorate them were extolled with a prosiness that sounded like an after-clap of William's Reichstag and monument orations."

The length, if not the dulness, of the discourse had, however, one good effect: it gave Menzel ample time to formulate a fitting reply, and, bowing low at the conclusion of the tirade, he said, with perfect *sang-froid*: "I believe I have the honour of addressing Adjutant-General Baron von Leutulus, and I beg of your Excellency to submit to his Majesty, the King, my sincerest thanks for this unexpected honour."

The artist having entered into the spirit of the thing, the Kaiser's impromptu farce proceeded smoothly. First of all came the obligatory review of the guards, who had

to go through some old-time exercises; then Baron von Lyncker ordered the mixed company in the Music Room —Empress, ladies-in-waiting, actors, officers, and fiddlers —to assume the poses and duties assigned to each individually.

The master was allowed to contemplate the prototype of his *chef-d'œuvre* for a little while before he took his seat; but soon the Emperor, sitting by his side, gave the signal to the musicians, who intonated Frederick's flute concerto, doubtless the finest composition that emanated from the great King's prolific pen.

Later on, the players performed a piano concerto by Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussia, the young and enthusiastic gentleman who is credited with having been the lover of Madame Récamier and Madame de Stäel at the same time (Napoleon threatened to shut him up with the latter in some lonely castle, and exhibit their offspring at the country fairs, as horrible examples of the union of pedantry with bottomless conceit), and finally Joachim fascinated us all with a noble rendition of Sebastian Bach's masterpieces.

We supped in the Marble Hall, whose superb cupola rests upon sixteen white pillars from Carrara, but the Kaiser's attempt to establish a "round table" resembling that of his ancestor was a failure. It is easy enough to arrange a mummery—money and a little tailor's wit will do for that; but it is quite another thing to copy a Voltaire "eloquent as Cicero, witty as Pliny, and as learned as Agrippa"; a La Mettrie, a D'Argens, an Algarotti, or even a General Quintus Icilius. And it takes more than royal birth and fine jewels to impersonate a Princess Amalia, and more than beauty of face and a pair of graceful shoulders, such as the Countess Bassewitz possesses, to represent the witty Margravine!

While their Majesties and the company, after supper, were admiring the illuminated fountain, then the latest of novelties, I went once more into the Music Room, where the wax lights were burning at low ebb.

This, then, had been the theatre of Frederick's love-making; here reigned the sole queen of his heart, the

only woman whom he loved after ascending the throne, as all contemporaries, from Abbé Denina to Voltaire, assert.

Portraits of this famous beauty between high mirrors in silver frames were all around the room—Venus-Barbarina coquetting with Pygmalion; Pomona-Barbarina yielding gracefully to the masked demi-god; Diana-Barbarina slumbering while pretty nymphs mount guard over her; Barbarina embraced by Apollo; Barbarina and Pan; Barbarina, the genius of Love; Barbarina, the woman, clad only in her surpassing grace, her supernatural loveliness, her glorious black hair unsullied by powder, her breasts and limbs radiant with the voluptuousness of southern youth!

Antoine Pesne, painter to the King, expended all his genius as a colourist of the schools of Giorgione and Titian, all his true artistic intensity of feeling, on these canvases, which happily saw the light before the renaissance of the yellowish Rembrandt tint, that annoys the lover of art in the majority of portraits of a somewhat later period. Pesne was first and last a portrait-painter; but the King's desire to see the beloved woman in all sorts of attitudes, in classical garb and without, gave his magic brush a far wider field. Henceforth he devoted himself to composing grand mythological scenes in which La Barbarina formed the central figure, and where unblushingly he withdrew the veil from the charms of her person.

I was contemplating these reminiscences in silent reverie when the door opened and the Kaiser came in with little Menzel.

"I have a mind to engage Angeli to paint her Majesty's picture in the costume of Princess Amalia," said the Emperor. "What do you think of it?"

"Angeli is painter to many emperors and kings," replied the professor, and I saw him smile diplomatically as he moved his spectacles to get a better view of the allegorical canvas on the left wall that exhibits the nude figure of the famous mistress in its entirety.

"I am glad you agree with me on that point," said

the Emperor, impatient to execute the idea that had just crossed his mind. "I will telegraph to him to-night."

And when, five minutes later, Menzel bent over my hand to take his formal leave, I heard him murmur in his dry, absent-minded manner: "Pesne—Angeli—Frederick the Great—William II.!"

CHAPTER VIII

THE KAISER AS FINANCIER—HIS NIGGARDLINESS—THE KAISER AS ARCHITECT—THE FALL OF CAPRIVI—HOHENLOHE, CHANCELLOR

"HAS anybody heard of the projected English tour of the Meiningens?" asked his Majesty at dinner in the Berlin Schloss one afternoon in February, 1892.

Herr von Egloffstein responded. He had heard the Hereditary Prince say that he and the Princess intended to accept an invitation of Queen Victoria to Windsor Castle.

"But the cost!" exclaimed the Kaiser; "it will be at least ten marks a head for their Highnesses every day they are absent."

Next day, at second breakfast, the Emperor's menu card, on which his Majesty had sketched "the future south front of the castle with the surrounding territory," was handed around the table.

"I am glad to announce to you," he said, after all had expressed due admiration, "that I have perfected my plans for the improvement of the Schloss. After abolishing the popular amusement of looking into the Kaiser's windows" (his Majesty referred to the dismantling of the houses on the Schloss Freiheit, where now the monument of William I. stands, and which was formerly occupied by a row of decrepit old houses and shanties whose inhabitants had a very good view of the imperial apartments opposite)—"after routing the sweet public across the way, I have decided to erect another barrier between myself and publicity. As the sketch shows, terraces will be built adjoining the south front of our

palace, and they will extend far enough to place within the royal precinct that part of the castle square that lies between the Schloss and the great fountain. These terraces," added the Kaiser, with a self-satisfied laugh, "will at the same time serve to deaden some of the noise from the incessant traffic."

"Will the city be willing to sacrifice the space?" asked the Prince of Saxe-Altenburg, who was the guest of honour that day.

"If I permit the razing of the old houses between Breite Strasse and Kurfürsten Brücke, certainly," replied the Kaiser, who was still smiling.

"But the scheme, if pushed to such length, will involve an outlay of twenty millions," warned the Minister of the royal house, Herr von Wedell.

"Maybe, more or less." The Emperor said this with a frown, but immediately resumed his semi-bantering tone, and added, lightly: "Perhaps I will authorise your Excellency to arrange another Schloss Improvement Lottery, or to take up a loan that holds out large premiums, as they do in Austria and Servia." With that he turned to his neighbour, the Countess Brockdorff, whom he detests and ordinarily treats with the severest indifference, and, by way of changing the subject, told her a rather *risque* story of a little boy, who, being disturbed in the night, asked his father what was the matter. The father's reply is too well known to be printed here.

"Oh, bother the brother!" cried Johnny; "make me one of those rabbits with pink eyes."

Poor Brockdorff nearly fainted, and looked helplessly around the table, while the Emperor slapped his knee and seemed ready to burst with laughter. "It is the very latest," he said to his Highness of Saxe; "got it from Kotze!" (then still a master of ceremony); "he heard it from his wife, who learned it from Schrader" (another master of ceremony, who was subsequently shot and killed by his colleague in the famous duel), "and Schrader credits it to Otero."

That is the Kaiser all over; it worries him to think that any of his relatives should spend ten marks, and

he disposes of ten or twenty millions of public moneys as if they were old bricks or oyster-shells; in fact, the Kaiser has no notion whatever of the value of the "yellow boys."

Among the many strange facts in this volume, William's remark concerning the Meiningens' trip to England is certainly not the least astonishing, coming from a man who is almost continuously on the road—the heir and heiress to a Duchy, paying a visit of state at Windsor Castle, covering their combined expenses with a paltry one pound a day! The surmise is too ridiculous to require analysis; but it might be just as well to state here that the Prince of Meiningen is a very rich man, although the bulk of his fortune is still in the hands of the reigning Duke and the latter's third wife, the former actress Helen Franz, called Baroness Heldburg. He lives, if not in splendour, in the style befitting his station, and his wife is certainly the best-dressed woman at Court.

On their travels the princely pair are always attended by a suite of from fifteen to twenty people, all of whom, the Emperor thinks, can be provided with transportation and incidentals for twenty marks per day! That her Majesty of England sent a very large cheque to the Prince of Meiningen to defray the expenses of his visit, as I happen to know, does not alter the case one whit, for William was, and is probably up to this day, ignorant of the fact.

"It is merely a matter of mistaken identity," said "Lottchen's" husband, when the Prince of Saxe reported the conversation to him; "William thinks I am one of my gamekeepers, as he once mistook Bismarck for his chief bootblack."

That was certainly a charitable view to take; but it does not coincide with the facts. The cold, precise truth is that the man striving for absolute power in Germany and in Prussia, whose combined annual budgets reached the sum of three thousand one hundred and forty millions of marks in 1896, has, as already pointed out, no head for figures.

It is clearly a deficiency in William's mental make-up: as some people lack the sense of locality, so the Emperor happens to be destitute of a proper comprehension of values. Units or tens, three, seven, or eight naughts,—his Majesty recognises a distinction between these factors in one respect only. To quote once more Prince Stolberg, who, as is well known, soon tired of the job of "standing off Peter and owing Paul": "I think I have done as well as anybody can with such a pupil of economics. I made him understand that the Reichstag people deal with millions, while we at Court must be content with using tens and hundreds and even thousands, if it comes high."

This seems to be the only mathematical rule that has taken root in William's brain, and, agreeable to Stolberg's admonitions, he appears to have set himself a limit of three or ten marks for every-day use, and of fifty or one hundred marks for high days and holidays, so to speak. This applies, of course, to personal disbursements only, the requirements of the household, the travelling, representation, and amusement budgets being regulated by his grand officers and according to certain rules.

How well I remember the flutter and pleasant anticipations I experienced during my first Christmas season at the Prussian Court. Not that I nursed great expectations on my own behalf (I have been royalty's favourite all my life, and received many precious gifts from the old Emperor and Empress, as well as from my present master and mistress, in the days of my prosperity); but I felt for our faithful servants, whose lives, though spent in a palace, are harder in many respects than those of the general run of employees, or even of comparatively poor people. In their gorgeous liveries and tidy house-dresses they look suave and contented enough to the occasional beholder, but their lot is scarcely as happy as their serene faces indicate; neither do their wages correspond with their silver-edged clothes of fine material. Off and on I have heard of cases of poverty, even of destitution, in their families, for which they dared not ask relief in the most likely place, of their master or mistress, who caused

it to be known once and for all that they must not be annoyed by their servants' personal concerns.

It is a hard rule, I argued, but may be imperative with so large a staff of people. In this bountiful Christmas season, surely, their Majesties would make up for it. Picture, then, my amazement when I heard the Emperor say to her Majesty, at the beginning of Holy Week: "I have cautioned Miessner (a privy councillor, who administers the royal purse) to pay the customary ten marks only to those servants—lackeys and maids—who wait upon me personally. It will be well for you to instruct Baron von Mirbach similarly, or you will run the risk of feeing a whole tribe of men and girls who are merely second or third assistants to your own people."

William's valets, I heard later on, received fifty marks from their imperial master as Christmas gratuity; all his other attendants, men and women, had to be content with the customary ten marks "for gingerbread," as the *pourboire* is styled at Court.

"And that is the only *Trinkgeld* the Kaiser dispenses all the year round," complained the wife of one of the wardrobemen, who does my plain sewing; "outside of Christmas, his Majesty never seems to have a pfennig for his body-servants. Although himself continuously in want of stimulants (he often drinks four or five egg cognacs in the course of a day), it never strikes him that his overworked attendants might feel like stepping across the way to the canteen and 'crook an arm,' with your Ladyship's permission."

Occasional beggars that accost him on his rides through Potsdam or Berlin receive three marks from the Emperor, and a like sum is appropriated every Sunday for the benefit of the contribution-plate; his adjutant hands him the coin before he steps into his carriage going to church; beggars must report at the royal stables for their mite.

Whether this tardy generosity is an evidence of hard-heartedness, as people in the royal service claim, or whether the Kaiser's unlimited egotism is to blame, I would not like to decide; perhaps both work together,

perhaps Count Stolberg's advice has something to do with it, while the Kaiser's inability properly to judge monetary values remains the prime factor. To emphasise this latter point let me give one more anecdote.

William, who is nothing if not a slave to tradition, has revived a habit of several of his ancestors, namely, to stroll out of his palace gate as an ordinary mortal once a year on *Heiliger Abend* (Holy Evening, the night before Christmas), when he dons the most subdued civilian dress his wardrobe affords, and when no adjutant, or any one of the body service, is allowed to follow him —a general order that, however, does not apply to the secret police, which is made acquainted with the Kaiser's every out-door move beforehand, and has its guardian angels about wherever and whenever he is in the open.

"The war-lord, masquerading as a sub-officer on leave," as his brother-in-law of Meiningen once described him on a similar occasion, walks through the park behind the Neues Palais toward Sans Souci and often rambles beyond the gates of the ancient château, wishing a "Merry Christmas" to and distributing small gold pieces among needy persons he encounters.

It was originally a novel amusement for the Kaiser and a profitable one for the poor men and women who happened to attract his attention when his pockets were still lined; that is, while his charity fund of two hundred marks, divided up into fourteen gold crowns and three double crowns, lasted; and courtiers and others near William, having the higher interests of the monarchy at heart, used to rejoice in this solitary manifestation of royal goodwill, that helped to re-cement the bonds between king and people, those bonds growing further and further apart in our democratic times, when the most conspicuous representative of kingship has seemingly forgotten that there is anything common between him and the rest of mankind.

"Will it please your Majesty to go on your usual Santa-Claus expedition this evening before the trees are lit?" asked Court-marshal Count Eulenburg at second breakfast on the day preceding Christmas of 1894.

"Most certainly," replied the Kaiser, "and, by the way, direct Miessner to furnish me with silver coins, instead of gold, this time—fourteen Thalers and three or four five-mark pieces. You see," he added, addressing himself to the Empress, "I have been thinking about this giving away of crowns and double crowns; some poor devil, whom I try to benefit, might arouse suspicion when he offers my Christmas present in payment. That element of distrust and danger I will circumvent by spending only Thalers among my needy friends hereafter."

"How thoughtful of you," lisped the Empress devouring her husband with admiring glances.

"Your Majesty thinks of everything," said the Countesses von Brockdorff and von Bassewitz *unisono.* And "Of everything, particularly his pocket," whispered my neighbour, Count M——, mockingly. For my own part, I was in hopes that the Kaiser might reconsider the matter and arm himself with the full quota of two hundred marks in silver before he started out; but when he came to take leave of her Majesty, he drew from his overcoat pocket the shabby little amount he had decided to spend, fifty-seven marks in all, brand new silver pieces each one of them.

"The poor are in luck to-night," he said. "Miessner selected the brightest Thalers in his treasury, they are really very pretty," and the Kaiser laughed as the hapless Princess Lamballe may have laughed as she exclaimed: "If the poor have no bread, let them eat pastry."

As little as I would be inclined to charge the young beauty who gave her head for Marie Antoinette's friendship, with heartlessness, so little do I agree with Count M——'s uncharitable surmise, that the Kaiser resolved upon the change from crowns to marks for reasons of economy. On the contrary, the probabilities are that he did not consider the losses his poor would suffer or the saving on his own part, for one single moment, his inability to judge values rightly precluding such a course.

This strange state of mind is not without pathological interest, of which more later; but as a secondary cause

the practice of bringing up young princes in complete ignorance of money-matters must be held responsible.

Royal parents seem to think that to deprive their sons up to the day of their majority of a decent amount of pocket-money is the surest, nay, the only way to keep their boys from becoming spendthrifts.

In Prussia, the princely youth is allowed a few Thalers per week, of which the minutest accounting is demanded, and which—and that is the worst feature—he may not even manage in person, that privilege being reserved for his governor or Court-marshal. The practice has worked havoc immeasurable with us, as well as with others; but there seems to be little hope that this doltish idea, worthy of its avaricious progenitor, Frederick William I. of Prussia, will be abandoned soon.

True, young Hohenzollerns are not liable to be flogged nowadays for spending a few pfennigs unnecessarily, as Crown Prince Frederick was when he gave a royal servant eight Groschens for bringing his dog from Potsdam to Wusterhausem, a distance of twenty miles (his father beat him "for having no more sense than to pay a man who merely performed his damned duty"); but even so wide-awake a woman as the Empress Frederick insisted upon bringing up the heir to the throne without giving him a chance to acquaint himself with the power, the temptation, the misery, and the joy that the possession of ready money carries with it. As the holes in the Greek philosopher's toga denoted vanity rather than contempt of worldly opinion, so the patches on a youthful Hohenzollern's trousers indicate not Spartan frugality, but a false notion of the principles of economics. Our Princes are not taught that it is necessary to economise in order to be liberal; they are merely deprived of things they like—good clothes and cash—in obedience to a hoary delusion that has peopled the thrones of Europe with spendthrifts or niggards for the past century.

I have heard the former Court-marshal von Liebenau say that William, when at college, never had a copper over and above his expenses, all of which were disbursed by him, Liebenau.

"When he entered active service, that old bane—penury—hovered over the lieutenant, captain, and colonel; his entire income was made over to me every month or quarter, and as it was always spoken for in advance, my young master even aspired in vain for a pocket-piece, a double gold crown."

We now return to that twenty-million project launched with so much self-satisfied complacency "between soup and fish." On the eve of its birthday—for we learned by-and-by that the Kaiser, who picked up the idea in a rambling memorial of his grand-uncle, the mad Frederick William IV., and, after adopting and fathering the plans, made haste to parade them before the visiting Prince and the Court as his own and as something brand new—at supper, the same day, William brought forward many fresh arguments in favour of his grand schemes.

The municipal council, he explained, if it were not entirely composed of Socialists, could not offer any objection to his plans, "no matter what the cost," for he meant to give the terraces over to his sons as a playground. Wedell must argue that the terraces would offer a formidable bulwark against the plans of anarchists. And as a final trump: "We will promise to prolong the annual stay of the Court at Berlin at least one month or six weeks."

During the next week or so, at luncheon, dinner, and supper, at receptions, concerts, and balls, the Court talked of nothing but the projected castle improvements, and the Kaiser never wearied of explaining his plans to visitors privately, and to a roomful of guests and attendants collectively. Then, suddenly, a change of base was decreed. The terraces were hurled from their imaginary pedestals, and in their stead the ever-ready imperial pencil pictured to us the Schloss situated on a green peninsula, and surrounded by majestic waters on three sides. According to this latest plan, Schinkel's classic Academy of Architecture was to be levelled, and Schinkel Square dropped fifty feet, to make room for a splendid lake five acres in circumference, the waters of

which were to wash the feet of William the First's gigantic monument.

The scheme looked uncommonly well on paper, and his Majesty experienced small difficulty in finding theoretical supporters for his sublime projects; but, unfortunately, the matter got into the newspapers even before preliminary negotiations with the city authorities had been opened, and a storm of indignation, ridicule, and defiance broke loose.

"Not a pfennig for these *baunärrische*" (construction-mad) "schemes, not an inch of city property," began a press article, which I was obliged to read to her Majesty a few mornings later; and "the times are past when nations build palaces for spendthrift sovereigns," wrote somebody, who desired to remain nameless, to William in a letter postmarked Berlin, W., the fashionable quarter; "we pay the King of Prussia a salary nowadays, and he has to get along on it as well as any other official, unless, like an army officer, he married a woman with money."

The protests from the provinces were not less vigorous. It appears that the minister of the royal house, for some time past, had endeavoured to persuade the authorities of Hanover, Cassel, and Wiesbaden, where royal theatres are established, to release the exchequer from its obligation to furnish a subsidy for the maintenance of these institutions. "The royal Princes," wrote the eloquent Herr von Wedell, "are growing up, and funds for their education, their proper maintenance, clothes, and so forth, must be set aside. In view of this increase of his obligatory expenses, his Majesty has reluctantly consented to a curtailment of such outlays as come under the head of contingent charges," and so forth.

Well worded, was it not? this appeal on behalf of one's six boys; but the Hanoverians, Casselers, and Wiesbadeners refused to be bamboozled. They stood upon their rights, and when, in the course of events, the Kaiser's great building plans were divulged, they congratulated themselves upon their firmness, with many disrespectful allusions to the baby act that had failed.

And the end of it all? The scandal assumed such

proportions that there was nothing left but a complete backdown.

On the 9th of March it was announced at luncheon that his Majesty had gone to Hubertusstock, where he does most of his sulking, and in the afternoon Minister von Boetticher got up in the Diet and quieted public opinion by a few well-set lies.

"Those grand building projects," he said, "have never had any existence except in the brains of hungry penny-a-liners and ambitious architects. Nobody at Court has ever dreamed of their realisation. In fact, they have never been discussed in the all-highest presence."

"The greatest fools are always the greatest liars," Prince Bismarck laughingly remarked to Duke Johann Albrecht of Mecklenburg, when his Highness related the facts to him.

"Do you refer to Boetticher or——?"

"To Boetticher, of course; am I not his sworn enemy, according to the newspapers?" replied the old Prince; "to Boetticher," he repeated, "who prophesied Caprivi's fall, and, to save his own neck, had to lie publicly and shamelessly,—a thing I have never done during my long official life."

Another deadly parallel of the extreme in the Kaiser's character, similar to that exemplified by the Meiningen and the building project matters, might be drawn by placing the reported reduction of his Majesty's Christmas charity in juxtaposition to his contemplated appropriation of certain public moneys entrusted to his keeping.

I refer to the so-called "Imperial Disposition Fund," intended to afford relief to Prussian and German veterans of the wars and in case of great national disasters. As its name implies, the right of bestowing grants out of the three million marks, annually set aside for the purposes specified, is vested in the sovereign—reason enough for William, who recognises no obligation that conflicts with his "all-highest" pleasure, to regard the money as a sort of augmentation of the civil list, in the same way as he takes the naval phrases, "his Majesty's cruiser," "his Majesty's torpedo," &c., literally.

To convey a thorough understanding of this matter, we shall have to go back to the events of March, 1892. It was my imperial mistress who, after the withdrawal of Count Zedlitz's common-school law, persuaded von Caprivi to remain in office.

"*Votre petite guerre est finie*," said the Emperor to her Majesty at supper on March 28, "and you have not been luckier than Madame Eugenie. Rest assured, though, that I will not be in the market again for any of Uncle Christian's ultra-Christian plans. No, we will not go to Cumberland Lodge a second time!"

Her Majesty grew pale and blushed violently in rapid succession. Her bosom heaved, and some of the wine in the glass she was raising to her lips spilled over her superb gown.

"I do not quite understand, Willie," she said at last, lisping painfully in her agitation.

"Beg your Majesty's pardon," was the Kaiser's sarcastic reply; "I thought everybody knew by this time that I had to withdraw the *Volksschulgesetz* and turn Zedlitz adrift. My government was fast becoming the laughing-stock of Europe with this Augustenburg sort of legislation, as Bismarck styles it."

"The old enemy of our house——" whimpered Auguste Victoria.

"You are mistaken in your surmise: I am not quoting from the *Hamburger Nachrichten*. The Prince expressed himself thus towards your uncle Waldersee, pointing out at the same time the risks I was running in advocating a law liable to be associated in public opinion with petticoat and family influences."

I did not hear the whole of the above conversation, and lost the rest of it altogether, as, by the Empress's request, William lowered his voice after this last sally; but her Majesty repeated it word for word when we ladies attended her in her dressing-room later on. "The Kaiser chooses to put all the blame for this failure upon myself and my family," she said, amid a flood of tears; "but, by all that is holy to me, I swear, neither my uncle, nor I personally, had anything to do with the launching

of the *Volksschulgesetz*. Prince Christian, it is true, has endeavoured to impress his Majesty with the importance of his religious duties as *summus episcopus*, and the two gentlemen have had conferences about the best ways and means to combat disbelief and atheism in Germany, but I am convinced that my uncle never ventured advice on matters of legislation. He merely tried to rouse my husband's interest in divine matters, as any ardent follower of the Lord should do. The *Volksschulgesetz* as such was the Kaiser's own creation, though some of the ideas incorporated in it might have come from across the channel."

"Your Majesty should not have minded the Kaiser's ill-humour," I ventured to say; "the attitude of Parliament and the press naturally angered him and——"

"I know, I know," interrupted Auguste Victoria; "I can forget everything but the words: 'We will not go to Cumberland Lodge a second time.' It was there, at my uncle's seat, that William and I fell in love with each other."

The Kaiser slept, on the night that followed Count Zedlitz's enforced resignation, in his little private bedroom, and next morning departed for Hubertusstock before her Majesty had risen. That was enough to paint our gilded *salons* an ashen grey, in which the children, her Majesty's ladies, friends, and attendants, vanished as if behind a cloud. Auguste Victoria refused to be comforted: her husband had left her in a fit of irritation; the sovereign lady was seemingly incapable of turning her thoughts from the disquieting subject. In the midst of her lamentations, a despatch arrived from Queen Victoria, which I was ordered to decipher. "It is reported here that Caprivi will resign. Let it be averted at all hazards. It would be nothing short of a calamity just now," telegraphed the Kaiser's grandmother.

"I will drive to the Chancellor at once," cried the Kaiserin, so great was her respect for Queen Victoria's political wisdom; but the Grand-mistress, Countess Brockdorff, succeeded in dissuading her from so extraordinary a step by referring to the lack of precedents and sundry scruples of etiquette. Finally, it was agreed that

her Majesty should write to Caprivi; and all of us—the Kaiserin, Countess Brockdorff, Fräulein von Gersdorff, and myself — worked out drafts for the important epistle, with the understanding that the best of the four, containing certain points upon which we had settled, should be adopted and sent off after her Majesty had copied it. Of course, a lot of ink was spilled uselessly, and a still greater amount of time wasted, in discussing the merits of our various attempts; but in the end a reasonably appropriate paper was pieced together, whose leading passages read as follows:

"Pray do not leave the Kaiser in the lurch, and thus commit the country to an uncertain future now that the relations between the Crown and its first officer have once more strengthened, and most things that fell into a chaotic condition after Bismarck's retirement are being straightened out."

Herr von Knesebeck carried the letter to Wilhelms Strasse, and brought back the reassuring message that his Excellency considered it a great honour to obey her Majesty's command, and that he would wait upon the Kaiser in Hubertusstock the same evening.

The rest is history: Caprivi consented to remain in office, and the Zedlitz incident was no longer mentioned at Court.

All this, it will be remembered, happened in March, 1892. Two years later, the Empress thought quite differently about a change in the Chancellorship. By that time she had grown more and more isolated on the throne, with a husband always absent, if not physically, mentally, and the members of the royal family becoming estranged from her Court one after another. The necessity of having a relative in a commanding position near her, a man of her own caste, who understood her, an equal upon whom she could lean, became more imperative every day.

Waldersee it could not be. "Ah! if we had only Uncle Chlodwig with us." How often was this pious wish on my mistress's lips during the first half of the year 1894! "He is such a grand seigneur," she used to say,

"and as mild and temperate as a good priest! What an example he would be for my children!"

"He is also credited with an unusual amount of tenacity," I remarked on one of these occasions.

"You do not consider that a fault, Countess?" Her Majesty had assumed a supercilious tone, but quickly added, in an anxious voice: "It is, of course, out of the question that he should offer opposition to his Majesty as Bismarck did, and as this Caprivi is doing."

"I don't know about that. He told his former sovereign, King Louis of Bavaria: 'I possess all the attributes of birth and rank that any king in Christendom may lay claim to.'"

This intelligence did not please the Kaiserin, though her own mother is a Hohenlohe; but her scruples on that score had evidently worn off, or she had forgotten all about the incident, when the Kaiser, on October 25, upon his return from the memorable visit to Liebenberg, Count Philip Eulenburg's country-seat, asked her to write to Strassburg and "probe her uncle as to his willingness to accept the Chancellorship." As the German says, she was immediately "fire and flame for the project," and, after finishing her letter to the Emperor's lieutenant in the Reichslande, she sat up half the night scribbling to her mother, sisters, brother, and her relatives in England to tell them of Uncle Chlodwig's "good luck" and her own happiness at the contemplated ending of the "crisis," which, by the way, had come so suddenly that the royal ladies and gentlemen, or at least some of them, were completely taken by surprise. As the Duchess Frederick Ferdinand of Glücksburg put it, in her letter of reply: "We were just congratulating ourselves upon the vote of confidence William bestowed upon Caprivi on Tuesday, October 23 (it was reported in our *Moniteur*, the *Eckernfoerder Zeitung*, last night), when your Job's message came to hand."

"There," said her Majesty, as she handed the bundle of envelopes to Herr von der Knesebeck, "I have informed everybody that my husband will have peace hereafter, the chief cause of his anger and irritation, a

querulous and obstreperous servant, being sent back into obscurity."

Needless to say, the Kaiser could not wait until an answer to Auguste Victoria's letter arrived from Alsace. Next morning, a Friday, Herr von Lucanus, Chief of the Civil Cabinet, went to Caprivi, demanding, in the Kaiser's name, his immediate resignation, and when the General had complied with the request, William began telegraphing to Uncle Chlodwig, requesting him to accept.

The old Prince answered that he would leave the decision to his wife, who knew him best. If "Marie" thought the state of his health permitted an increase of his labours at his great age, he would follow the King's call. And "Auguste wants you. Be at the Schloss to-night," read Wilhelm's urgent rejoinder.

We ladies of the Court were kept informed of these high political carryings-on by the Emperor himself, who ran in and out of her Majesty's rooms constantly in those eventful days. "I have just learned that your aunt Marie is summering at Aussee" (with these words the Kaiser entered her Majesty's study shortly before tea-time); "send her a despatch saying that the Fatherland has a right to demand this sacrifice of her. I need Hohenlohe; he is the only man who can bridge over the present crisis."

The Emperor's commission, his confidence, made her Majesty unspeakably happy. "It is one thing to be a Queen, and another to reign," she said, proudly, when William had left, after correcting and partly rewriting her despatch.

Who could have withstood this electric campaign? Hohenlohe capitulated after forty-eight hours of prodding and promising, and on the 30th of the month their Majesties thanked Princess Marie in a joint telegram for her patriotism and disinterestedness.

The palace now once more became a place where one could eat and sleep in comfort, go to bed at stated hours, and set about one's morning toilet without fear of being called away at the most inopportune moment to decipher despatches, run errands completely out of one's sphere, or help to dry the royal mistress's tears. The Kaiser,

proud of his victory, the assertion of his self-will, gave himself over to the usual round of pleasures—the chase, all sorts of unveiling, and dedication ceremonies, the theatre, visiting, and military display; the Empress made it her business to appear happy and contented. She had been allowed to play a political part, the threads of a great state intrigue had rested momentarily in her hands; her ambition to become a second Queen Louise might not be unattainable after all. But we propose, and our dear relations dispose. Hohenlohe had not been in office a week when the fifty-six other Hohenlohes (you find them enumerated in the *Almanach de Gotha*), fortified and backed by their one hundred and sixty-odd grandmothers, mothers, aunts, wives, and daughters, began pestering the Court, and finally their Majesties themselves, with allusions to the great discrepancy between their kinsman's modest stipend as Chancellor and his former salary as Emperor's lieutenant in Alsace—a difference of a round hundred thousand marks per annum.

"It is impossible, from the family's standpoint, to permit such a sacrifice without indemnification."

"The Prince belongs, above all, to his kindred, whose glory and prosperity he is bound to help to increase." The latter phrase seems to be a free translation of the *semper Augustus* of the Roman imperators. "How can he be expected to live up to his duties as chief of the first branch of the younger line of the Hohenlohe-Waldenburg-Schillingsfürsts if he throws away a fortune every year of his life?"

"Uncle Chlodwig," so ran another line of argument, "is not a gay bachelor, but a father and grandfather, an uncle and cousin times innumerable. Dozens of Hohenlohes, besides his own children, depend for part of their income, at present or after his death, upon the noble old man, and to all these the enormous curtailment of salary is nothing short of a calamity."

A third batch of correspondents bluntly stated that "inasmuch as Hohenlohe had consented to accept the Chancellorship to please the Emperor, his Majesty was in honour bound to make good his pecuniary losses."

Epistles of this sort kept Auguste Victoria in a turmoil all through the month of November, the Emperor having refused to be disturbed by these screechings, after perusing one or two of the kind which showed conclusively whence the wind was blowing, as his Majesty expressed himself. Thereafter letters postmarked Waldenburg, Rauden, Bartenstein, Haltenbergstetten, Budapest, Lublinitz, or from any other city or place where the "damned curmudgeons reside," had to be delivered to the Kaiserin, whether addressed to William personally or not, the occasional absence of the well-known crest, with its tailed quadrupeds and crowned fowl, making no difference, "as some princes and noblemen are not above borrowing a neighbour's seal" when they have reason to believe that their letters, if recognised, may go unnoticed.

The adjutants *du jour* left *billets-doux* of that kind by the handful morning after morning at the Empress's rooms, and her Majesty's morbid curiosity, a characteristic strongly developed in lonely women—and the Empress is lonely even in her children's midst and surrounded by a houseful of friends—her loneliness made her not only notice these grievances and accusations, but study them, ponder over them. Only once have I seen my mistress unconcerned when thus employed—at the suggestion that Uncle Chlodwig needed a big salary, such as he had possessed and lost, in order to live in the style befitting his rank.

"Uncle Chlodwig a pauper!" she cried. "That is news, indeed; a poor man owning residential palaces in several capitals, and castles and country-houses all over Germany and in Austria!"

"Of course, the statement is ridiculous," said Baron von Mirbach; "but it is a fact, nevertheless, that his Grace has been sorely disappointed with respect to his Russian properties, or rather his wife's Russian inheritance, the Wittgenstein domains. The law prohibiting foreigners from holding property in Russia has forced him to dispose of many miles of territory at ruinous prices."

"I know," said the Empress, "and am glad that the

Kaiser promised to intervene with the Czar on that account. 'Nicky,' I am sure, will arrange matters satisfactorily."

"The Prince's relatives seem to know nothing of such an understanding," I remarked.

"Of course not," replied her Majesty, "for it is a state secret which, when I come to think of it, I should have more respected. But now that it is out, let me add that my husband's promise to secure a favourable settlement of those Russian affairs did more than all other arguments toward persuading the Prince to accept the Chancellorship."

This one-sided correspondence would probably have died out after a while for lack of argumentative fuel, if for no other reason, and the matter of the Chancellor's salary would have been forgotten, if, all of a sudden, the hydra of the anonymous letter had not raised its head again.

Herr von Kotze, the Imperial Master of Ceremony, suspected of flooding the Court with unspeakable accusations through nameless letters, had been released from custody July 5, and the lascivious pasquinades—his alleged fabrications—which regularly arrived throughout the time of his detention, had ceased coming for months.

"Your Majesty ought really not to be so hard on Hohenlohe on the salary question, considering that you have but to ask your wife's mother about the good uses Hohenlohe is making of his wealth. Indeed, if it had not been for 'Cousin Chlodwig,' the Duchess Adelaide and her children, among them the present German Empress, might have gone hungry many a day while the Augustenburger was fighting" (on paper) "for his throne." This letter the Emperor found in Berlin, November 15, on the eve of the day when he made that remarkable speech at the swearing-in of recruits, wherein he told those green boobies (in defiance of common-sense and grammar—I translate literally): "by donning the King's coat you have become something aristocratic."

William often expresses opinions of that sort, and I should not be surprised if in his heart of hearts he fully

believed that his uniform turns the average rustic lubber into a person of distinction, and places him above the rank of citizen. What a blow it must have been to him to learn on top of that speech that his wife's mother, his wife herself, at one time were beneficiaries of the man whom he had just created chief servant!

That evening the princely couple of Meiningen, Duke Günther and the hereditary Princess of Hohenzollern, took supper at Court, and to these relatives the Kaiser showed the letter just received.

"You are not going to send Leberecht back to Linden Strasse" (the military prison), said Princess Charlotte, who is intimate enough with Kotze to call him by his Christian name.

"Your fool-friend has no part in my meditations just now," answered William gruffly. "I am thinking about ways and means to stifle this new scandal. The report —whether true or not is immaterial—that the German Empress's mother accepted charity from a Hohenlohe must not be allowed to spread, and I see but one way to prevent it: those salary-grabbers must be appeased; the income of Emperor's lieutenant must be restored to the Chancellor."

Thus far the Emperor had spoken in a loud, almost vehement manner, so that the ladies and gentlemen, standing at a respectful distance, lost not a syllable of his tirade; but as he proceeded he lowered his voice, and I do not believe that the rest of his speech was understood by anybody outside of the royal circle, for, acting as lady *du jour* on that occasion, and as, besides, I was waiting to hand my mistress a *mouchoir* before we went to table, I was nearest to his Majesty, and, though my hearing is good, I failed to catch a word of what he said in confidence.

The import of it all I learned, however, the same evening, without solicitation on my part, from one of the royal guests, who whispered, as we stood listening to the music: "I begin to believe those rumours charging my——" (the Emperor) "with having made inroads upon the Guelph Fund, seeing that he means to seize

upon the *Dispositionsfond* to repay Hohenlohe for advances made to his mother-in-law."

"What does your Royal Highness mean?"

"That the Kaiser told us to-night he was resolved to grant Hohenlohe an annual augmentation of his salary, amounting to one hundred thousand marks, out of the fund appropriated by the Reichstag for the benefit of crippled soldiers, widows, and orphans, and of the victims of fire, storm, and other elementary misfortunes."

"Impossible! It would be malfeasance."

"A robbery; just so, *gnädige Gräfin*, if—if a semi-demented person could be guilty of crime."

CHAPTER IX

THE *DISPOSITIONSFOND* AFFAIR—THE KAISER AND THE PRUSSIAN GUARDS—THE GUELPH FUND

LIFE at Court ran in smooth channels for some weeks following the little family party just described; the coroneted graphomaniacs who had embroiled the imperial couple in the nastiest sort of family dispute stopped writing after firing one more broadside of admiration and excuses, instead of distrust and calumny as before, and the political horizon being unusually tranquil, the Kaiser and Kaiserin gave themselves up to the pleasures of the season, his Majesty hunting and speechifying, dining out, and enjoying little trips, the Empress knitting and sewing for the orphan asylums and making other preparations for Christmas. "Uncle Chlodwig" was now a frequent guest at the Neues Palais, and his relations with William were seemingly of the best, although it struck me that the young Kaiser treated the old man in a rather patronising way, as if he meant to insinuate: "Remember what I have done for you, and that, like a true benefactor, I have acted promptly and without fuss."

Toward the end of the month another anonymous letter, this time addressed to her Majesty, was received. It prophesied grave troubles, "for," said the writer, "the *Dispositionsfond* affair is known to the press," but, as nothing relating to it was printed during the next four or five days, her Majesty concluded that a hoax had been practised upon her. On December 6 occurred the great Reichstag scandal: the Socialistic members refused to rise from their seats when the house honoured the sovereign by a hurra.

I thought her Majesty would fall ill with indignation and rage when the matter was first brought to her attention; but, contrary to expectation, we found the Kaiser calm and dignified. "If this demonstration," he said, in the course of the evening meal, "was aimed at me, it was a failure; it did not reach the tips of my boots. On the other hand, the Socialistic rabble has trampled on the dignity of the Reichstag wantonly and maliciously, and for this the Reichstag must demand satisfaction. As for my government, the occurrence is water for our mills. It means the success of the *Umsturtz Vorlage*" (the anti-revolutionary bill).

All agreed upon this point as a matter of course, and therewith the incident was set at rest, we thought, so far as the Court was concerned; but, unfortunately the Kaiser changed his mind as to the impersonality of the target. After repeating the temperate and statesmanlike interpretation of the incident above quoted to Herr von Letzow, Baron von Buol, and Dr. Bürklin, the presidents of the Reichstag, who called at the Neues Palais on Sunday, December 9, he ordered Prince Hohenlohe, by an autograph note, indited twenty-four hours later, to ask permission of the Reichstag to prosecute the Socialist leader Liebknecht for *lèse-majesté* then and there, the consent of that body being necessary, as the constitution guarantees to members of Parliament immunity from arrest during sessions.

There was much groaning in the palace when the Reichstag refused to create so dangerous a precedent. The Kaiser characterised the unfavourable vote by saying that the nation's deputies were suffering, "one and all, from *Rothe Ruhr*" (bloody flux), "and therefore could not be at their Emperor's service"; but the graver consequences of this useless stirring up of opposition developed somewhat later, and the Emperor, Hohenlohe, and the Court all suffered in consequence.

There appeared, shortly before the holidays, in the Berlin *Post*, known as the organ of the foreign ministries, an *entrefilet*, purporting to correct a paragraph printed in an obscure Socialistic sheet, that hinted darkly at a

conspiracy between Kaiser and Chancellor to defraud a public fund, and, with the clumsiness that distinguishes the official fault-finder, the *Post* "dumped the child with the bath-water," as Bismarck used to say. It denied the conspiracy, and then calmly told the damning truth of the matter; namely, that his Majesty, in recognition of Prince Hohenlohe's distinguished services, his patriotism and disinterestedness had been "graciously pleased to grant him an extra subvention of one hundred thousand marks from the charity fund at his disposal." Now the *Post*, an afternoon paper, is usually not delivered at the Neues Palais until next morning, but that night a stray copy found its way to the adjutant's room, and his Majesty appeared at the supper-table with a darkened brow. He was most ungracious toward her Majesty, and all the ladies, myself included, were treated to sarcastic remarks that often approached downright rudeness.

"A thunder-storm is gathering—I wonder who will be hurt?" remarked my neighbour, Herr von Egloffstein, *sotto voce*. At that moment the chasseur handed the Kaiser a letter bearing a great official seal.

"There," said his Majesty to the Empress, after perusing the missive, "your uncle thanks me for my good intentions, and relinquishes, at the first blast from the enemy's camp, the fortune I threw into his lap. But," he added, rising and casting an inquisitorial look around the table, "I will find out who bears tales from my own house to dirty newsmongers, if I have to people Linden Strasse prison as Spandau was peopled at the time of the Trosqui conspiracy."[1]

The Kaiser left the dining-room without offering his arm to the Empress, and as her Majesty followed him to inquire the meaning of the scene, we of the service (there were no guests that evening) were free to hold an impromptu talk among ourselves.

Adjutant von Moltke, who had read the *Post*, explained the situation.

[1] A mysterious plot, in which a lady-in-waiting to Frederick the Great's mother, Madame de Blasphil, was involved; she escaped the ignominy of being put on the rack only by a miracle.

"Great God!" cried Countess Brockdorff, "his Majesty thinks one of us played informer in the *Dispositionsfond* matter."

"But this is the first we hear of it," said Mademoiselle von Bassewitz.

"It is the newest sort of news to me," shrieked Fräulein von Gersdorff.

"As her Excellency knows," I said, looking straight at the grand-mistress, "her Majesty received an anonymous letter threatening an *exposé*, such as has occurred now, two or three weeks ago."

"I remember," replied Madame von Brockdorff slowly.

"But," cried Count Moltke and Herr von Egloffstein, with one voice, "why didn't you ladies report this to his Majesty? The scandal, if not avoided, might have been nipped in the bud."

"It was the grand-mistress's office to give information of that kind," I said; an opinion in which the gentlemen upheld me.

While we were still conversing, her Majesty returned. Her eyes were red, and she was evidently labouring under great agitation. Calling Countess Brockdorff to her side, she began to talk to her in the most earnest manner, while the rest of us stood about aimlessly, helplessly. As Madame Carette says in her *Souvenirs intimes de la cour des Tuileries:* "The presence of the sovereign forbids, as a matter of course, every attempt at unchecked conversation." How much greater is the strain when the royal mistress, to the knowledge of all present, is suffering from her husband's displeasure, and the courtiers themselves are under a grave charge of suspicion! When her Majesty, long before the usual hour, bade us a half-hearted good-night, a feeling of relief came over me; but the relaxation did not last long, for when I reached my apartments I found a printed notice under the door—an order to "appear before the Royal Auditeur *in re* Anonymous Letters, next morning at 8 A.M." I prepared to go to Berlin, where all such examinations take place, by an early train, and was not surprised to find the

courtyard gay with the equipages of my colleagues and the numerous other Court officials about to embark on the same errand. Together we made up quite a party, filling all available first-class railway carriages, and the Berliners, seeing us drive down the Linden an hour later, must have wondered at the sudden invasion, though surely no one suspected that all these elegantly dressed women, these gentlemen in showy uniforms and beribboned dress-coats, had left their luxurious couches at an unearthly hour to answer the summons of the modern *Vehme*.

A *Vehmgericht* indeed, secret, unlawful, tyrannical. We will treat of it later on in the chapters devoted to the nastiest Court intrigue of modern times, the anonymous letter scandal. For the present, it will suffice to say that the judicial inquiries neither yielded the name of the person who revealed the Emperor's secret, nor afforded the least hint as to his or her identity.

After this excursion into the realms of high politics, a *milieu* which I meant to avoid in these papers, but whose allurements I cannot escape at all times, we will return to the subject: the Kaiser as a financier.

The preceding pages have pictured to us William seriously concerned about the light-hearted fashion with which a royal relative seemed to squander a dozen or more twenty-mark pieces, and simultaneously calling for an outlay of from ten to twenty millions to promote some useless building extravagances. Again, we have observed how he reduced his modest Christmas charity fund two-thirds, while at about the same time Prince Hohenlohe's salary was *increased* in equal proportion. In both instances William robbed the poor (or intended robbing them), to the advantage of the enormously wealthy, first of a hundred and forty-three marks, the second time of one hundred thousand marks; twice in succession he was guilty of actions that, as pointed out, bespeak at once hard-heartedness, egotism, and the lack of certain mental faculties.

And worst of all, these are not isolated cases, the results of caprice or ill-temper; but all through the public and private life of the Emperor confusion in matters of

finance is noticeable, like the proverbial red thread in the British marine, or red tape in our own government affairs.

Who has not read of William's thundering philippics against luxury in the officers' corps of the army? "The Prussian lieutenant, captain, and colonel must find supreme satisfaction in a frugal life. To live above one's income is the source of all social evil. Only the commanding generals have 'duties of representation' to fulfil, and their Excellencies shall not spend more for the purpose than the state appropriation permits," are stock phrases of his pronunciamentos issued from time to time. And as a variation of the stories on patched Hohenzollern trousers, the official telegraph bureau never fails to add the interesting information that the chief war-lord suffers the red facings of his uniform to be renewed several times before he throws away a coat.

Such is the theoretical side of the question; now to the practical.

In order to see whether his commands are strictly obeyed, the Kaiser invites himself to breakfast at the casino of some regiment every little while, announcing that he will pay ten marks for his and his suite's entertainment, not a penny more.

Now, the managers of these institutions know that his Majesty has his preferences as to wines and victuals, and the imperial Court-marshal is only too ready to enumerate them to the anxious. So French champagne of the highest grade, costly Rhine wines and Burgundy, imported cordials and cognacs, are bought, also game and fresh sea-food, which latter is a luxury with us. Furthermore, the exterior and interior of the club building are decorated, and often partly renovated, "and when, after all these preparations, the lavish outlay made, the imperial master departs with his corporal's guard of attendants" (when he has to pay for them he never brings more than half a dozen gentlemen), "and, on taking leave, remarks, with self-satisfied emphasis: 'You see, my dear colonel, ten marks is quite enough for anybody to spend on his stomach; I have had a very good breakfast' (or dinner),

'indeed, for that amount at your house,' you should study the faces of the subaltern officers," say the Kaiser's adjutants. "Count Eulenburg," they argue to themselves, "will send the governing board sixty or seventy marks within the next three months to pay for the exact number of seats occupied by the imperial party, while we poor devils will have to pay for the Piper, or Roederer, and the other delicacies, out of our monthly pittance next week."

As a matter of fact, it costs a regimental mess from five hundred to fifteen hundred marks every time the war-lord tries its ten-marks' menu (according to the decorations and renovations deemed necessary), and the officers have to make up the difference. There have been times when the pleasure of feasting the sovereign cost the lieutenants of the Potsdam garrison one-tenth part of their pay for several months in succession, and when the uniformed *garçons* of these pretty young fellows had to go without their more than modest wage in consequence. But that is not all. The Kaiser's adjutants report from time to time stories of wrecked lives—lives of army men who were lured upon the path that kills, by the all-highest example, or in consequence of William's casino visitations.

It is a mistake to think that the majority of officers serving in the Prussian Guards are wealthy men; a good many are sons of high officials, endowed with mighty titles joined to a diminutive salary, who can give their boys but very scant assistance. Of course, these handicapped *nonages* desire to shine with the rest, and working, as it were, under the eyes of the imperial chief, endeavour to attract his attention. Now, there is only one way for a subaltern officer to secure this boon under William II., viz., to dress smartly, for the Emperor is known to pick the best-accoutred man out of a hundred any time.

But if one aspires to be the Beau Brummel of the ball-room, the hunting-field, the club, the drill and parade grounds, credit with the regimental wardrobe-master is soon exhausted. Tailors demanding enormous profits as an offset against the risks involved have to be employed,

and from them to the "Jew" is but one step. According to this recipe, Count von R——, a dashing Rittmeister of the Body Hussars, was ruined, and Herr von L——, of the First Guards, kept him company, with hundreds of others of lesser note.

Herr von L——'s mother, widow of a privy councillor, who made her son a yearly allowance, besides keeping a family of several unmarried daughters, out of a pension of forty-five hundred marks, came to me in the fall of 1896, requesting an audience of her Majesty, and when, according to instructions, I inquired after the nature of her business with my mistress, she confessed, to my utter consternation, that she intended to petition the Empress to use her influence toward keeping the Kaiser away from the military casinos. Of course, to let Madame von L—— come near Auguste Victoria was entirely out of the question under the circumstances; but while, as a lady of the Court, I did my best to dissuade her from her purpose, as a woman I could not close my ears to that poor mother's arguments.

"My son's pay," she said, "amounted, as you probably know, to one hundred and seventy-five marks per month, of which all but forty marks were deducted for wardrobe account, representation and benefit funds, board and lodging, etc. Out of these forty marks and half as much again—my own modest contribution—Walter had to pay for his suppers, his tobacco, his car-fare, his amusements and incidentals, and, though it was hard work, he managed to keep within his income until his Majesty began to invite himself to the casino. After the Kaiser's first visit, my boy had to contribute fifteen marks toward the cost of the entertainment, and, to reimburse himself, borrowed a double gold crown from a comrade. In the course of the next month, his Majesty repeated his costly visit, and my boy was bled a second time. Then, after paying his comrade, he retained just five marks out of his pay, while a month of hunger and humiliation was staring him in the face! Soon afterward, Walter found himself struggling in the clutches of the usurer, and within six months" (they have not much patience with us penniless

bureaucrats) "his disgrace was gazetted. And believe me," added the broken-hearted mother, "my son's case is not an exceptional one; other promising young lives have been wrecked in the same way, and the ruin of hundreds of officers who judge the commanding chief by his deeds rather than by his words is but a question of time.

"For their sake, for the sake of their mothers and sisters," concluded Madame von L—— earnestly, "I am seeking audience with the Empress. I want to throw myself at her Majesty's feet, picturing to her the perils to which our sons are exposed by coming into personal contact with the Kaiser. I will say to her: 'His Majesty is certainly actuated by the highest motives, but the splendour of his presence, the gorgeousness of the entertainments provided for him, are apt to befool ambitious young men by deceiving them as to their own insignificance, and by lightening their sense of the responsibilities they owe to themselves, their family, and their country.'"

In this connection, an observation by General von Kessel, then commander of the First Guards, deserves mention. "If his Majesty wants to see his officers well dressed, he should stop eating them out of pocket-money at their casinos. They cannot afford to play the host and pay their tailors at the same time," said the dashing adjutant when the imperial party returned from the manœuvres in the early fall of 1895. Herr von Kessel referred to his Majesty's criticism of the dress of certain officers of the Breslau Cuirassiers, a body of troopers from whom William demands hospitality on all occasions.

In February, 1897, I had the honour of receiving the Princess Frederick Charles of Prussia at the Berlin Schloss, her Royal Highness calling during the Empress's absence. She was delighted to find everybody out. "I came to speak to their Majesties with respect to the anniversary" (the festivities in honour of the late Kaiser Wilhelm's one hundredth birthday), she said; "the letter of invitation prescribes costumes of the end of the eighteenth century, and I desired to explain to his Majesty why I cannot comply with such a request. To your Ladyship I mention

the true reason without hesitation, but, of course, it would have been painful to me to plead poverty to my nephew, he is so hard of comprehension" (*begriffsstutzig*) "in such matters. However, if the truth must be told, I am not rich enough by far to spend ten thousand marks on a costume serviceable for one occasion only, and, consequently, must decline to attend, much as I regret it, unless the Kaiser permits me to appear in the regulation ball-dress."

When I delivered this message to his Majesty, he scanned my face for a second or two in blank amazement as if he thought I was joking. Then he laughed. "Absurd!" he cried, "a Princess of Prussia unable to buy a few frocks! I see Madame, my aunt, is getting to be a niggard in her old age. But she must have her will; my Herr[1] grandfather was always very fond of the Princess, and we cannot do without her on this occasion."

During a reception held at the Schloss, on the evening of the same day, Princess Radziwill spoke of the great difficulties that many army officers, invited to the festivities, experienced to procure the necessary costumes.

"These gentlemen have had a month's time to prepare for my pageant, and I would advise none to be at all laggard in complying with my commands," said the Kaiser haughtily. "If there are not enough tailors and embroiderers in Berlin, the work can be sent to other cities."

"With your Majesty's permission, it is not the lack of hands and needles, but the scarcity of 'dough,' or as her Royal Highness, your Majesty's sister, says—'mint-drops,' that interferes. A great many of the younger officers, especially, can ill afford to spend six or seven hundred marks on a uniform that becomes absolutely useless after a few hours' wear."

"And where did your Grace acquire all this valuable information?" resumed the Kaiser, bowing formally and accentuating each word with a semi-sarcastic sneer.

"Anywhere, everywhere! They talk of nothing else

[1] The Kaiser never fails to preface references to his grandfather or his father by the appellation of "*Herr*."

in the *salons* and clubs." Princess Marie's French blood was up. "I felt like repeating to him what Pauline Metternich told the Empress Eugenie: 'I was born a grand dame, and I allow no one to *ironize* me,'" she said, afterward, to Countess Brockdorff, who remonstrated with her for losing her temper.

His Majesty merely shrugged his shoulders at the Princess's blunt speech. "If it is necessary to clothe my guests, as well as to feed them, I will appropriate twenty thousand marks to help your impecunious friends to pay for their costumes," he said, and at once changed the subject. The promise had, however, been heard by everybody in the assemblage, and as all of us numbered at least one poor relative or friend among the four hundred officers commanded to the festival, it is not strange that the affair gained wide publicity. The news seemed to spread throughout Berlin and Potsdam like a piece of local intelligence heralded in all the penny-dreadfuls. On the strength of it, the young *roués* of the Union Club doubled their stakes, and, the same night, "William-the-Bountiful's" health was drunk in numberless mess-rooms and beer-halls by youthful members of the aristocracy and army men whose greatest care had suddenly and unexpectedly been lifted off their shoulders by the Kaiser's words — lifted to descend again, its weight doubled by chagrin and disappointment, in the course of a few weeks, for, to quote one of his Majesty's nephews, the heir-presumptive to a tiny throne, "the twenty thousand marks' pledge proved to be an illusion, if not something worse—a snare! Being assiduously published by the Kaiser's *entourage* and members of the Court, it served its purpose admirably.

"With reimbursement guaranteed, as they thought, the officers commanded to the *tableaux vivants* spared no expense in their costuming. The most magnificent silks and velvets, the costliest gold and silver embroidery, were worn by everybody, rich and poor. 'We don't mind paying a couple of hundred marks ourselves in excess of the Kaiser's allowance,' argued those wholesouled young men.

"The result was the happiest—for William: a display gorgeous and luxurious far above expectations. And when it was over, the Emperor expressed his all-highest satisfaction, and went—hunting. He had seemingly forgotten about the twenty thousand marks, and no one dared remind him of his promise."

As Lord Burghley said to Queen Elizabeth: "Those who would make tools of Princes are the tools themselves!"

Court and society had not yet ceased talking of this exhibition of bad faith, when the Kaiser startled the whole country by another incident bearing on finance to a certain extent. As his brother Henry was about to embark for the Queen's Jubilee in the man-of-war *Koenig Wilhelm*, his Majesty sent him a despatch expressing regret that he had no better ship to give him, "because those unpatriotic scamps in the Reichstag refused me the necessary funds"—these being the same "scamps," by the way, who consented to increase the regular naval budget fifty per cent. during the first seven years of William's reign, besides granting two hundred and seventy-nine millions of marks' worth of extraordinary marine credits.

Again that confusion as to monetary matters, of which we have already had numerous startling examples. "Whether you place the nought before or after the figure, it's all the same to his Majesty," said Prince Stolberg. The Reichstag, permitting the naval budget to swell from twenty-seven millions per annum under William I. to fifty-five millions under William II., suffers the ignominy of a public scolding, exactly as if its members had decreed sweeping reductions instead.

There was a great deal of speculation in the public prints and in political circles as to the authenticity of the despatch quoted, and the majority of courtiers even inclined at first to the belief that Prince Henry had overstepped his authority when he read the imperial message before his officers, and thereby caused its publication, for the Prince, though tolerably good-natured and not bright, has the reputation of a mischief-maker, and it would

be just like him to set Parliament by the ears at his brother's expense if there was the slightest warrant for doing so.

However, one of the Kaiser's adjutants told me at least a week before the scandal became public that his Majesty had promised himself and them a "*kladderadatsch*" (a great hullabaloo) "previous to his brother's sailing," without intimating, however, in any way, wherein the hubbub would consist. Of course, that exonerated Prince Henry; his Royal Highness evidently followed orders, "performed his damned duty," as they say in Prussia; but, granted the Kaiser created this opportunity for insulting the Reichstag in a moment of anger, that would not explain the several palpable inconsistencies of his message—the setting aside of all Parliament has done for his marine plans; the nonsense of the assumption that an appropriation made in January or February would permit the placing in service of a battleship, or a number of them, one or two months later; and, thirdly, the obvious untruth that a better ship was not available.

I will pass over the first-mentioned contradictions of well-known facts to avoid repeating suggestions of a pathological nature; number two comes under the same heading, considering that this idle talk emanated from a man of affairs, well schooled in naval matters. The third point is the most interesting, because the most novel.

The Emperor's assertion that the *Koenig Wilhelm* was the only serviceable vessel at his disposal I shall not attempt to deny, as the Kiel and Wilhelmshaven shipping lists prove it utterly false and unwarrantable, but I shall recall a conversation between the Kaiser and little Prince Adalbert that occurred a month or so previous to the despatch scandal. Young Adalbert, despite his tender years, is a lieutenant in the marine, and his governor has taught him to exhibit interest in naval matters on all possible occasions. So, when he heard his father speak of "Uncle Henry's" forthcoming trip to "Grandma Victoria," he said quickly: "Will you let uncle have the *Hohenzollern?*"

The Kaiser, who had been very pleasant at luncheon,

and whose humour had continued in a happy mood while we were sipping our coffee in the *Tassen Zimmer*, suddenly changed his tone. Assuming the style of a severe preceptor, he made the frightened boy leave his mother's knee and "stand at attention."

"Under which title does the *Hohenzollern* rank in the marine lists?" he demanded.

"His Majesty's Aviso, the yacht *Hohenzollern*, at the Kaiser's exclusive disposal," reported the tiny lieutenant.

"Well, then," said the Emperor, "understand, sir, no subject shall assume the Kaiser's privileges."

His Majesty had spoken so severely and with such excessive emphasis that the little Prince became frightened and had to be conducted from the room, while the small assemblage of officials and guests sat about dispirited, a feeling of unrest having replaced the previous joviality.

"No subject shall assume the Kaiser's privileges,"—it was more than a rebuke; it was a declaration: Everything for William, the best, the most expensive that money can buy, a glut of everything, and—as in the days of Louis XIV.—if there be anything left after the king had his innings, well and good, the rest may come in for their share. Under *le roy Soleil*, "the rest" stood for the government of France; at the Berlin Court, it means the Empress, the children, the royal relatives, and the Court generally.

I shall have occasion to speak at length upon the finance of this royal establishment; may it suffice to say here that there are no appropriations for the different sections of the household which are not subject to drafts by the imperial master. Prince Stolberg, who ought to know, once ventured the opinion: "The Kaiser would as lief gobble up our pension or salary appropriations as——"

"As the Guelph Fund?" inquired Duke Günther.

"Your Highness is pleased to jest," replied the grand-master quickly, and then, changing his tone to one of semi-raillery, he continued: "Forty-eight millions of marks! No one could spend such an amount."

"Oh, yes, my brother-in-law could," laughed the Duke, with a mysterious air.

The above conversation, reported to me by an ear-witness, took place in May, 1894, during the festivities attending the prize-shooting of the officers of the Second Guards, in Potsdam, and this was, to my knowledge, the second time Günther of Schleswig brought up the matter of the Guelph Fund.

The Guelph Fund represents the sequestrated fortune of King George of Hanover, or his heir, the Duke of Cumberland, and its history is interesting. After annexing the kingdom of Hanover in the summer of 1866, Prussia restored their private fortune to the deposed Guelphs by the convention of September 29, 1867, but there was a string, or rather a steel cable, attached to this apparently voluntary act of restitution. Pointing out that the poor blind man whom he had vanquished might utilise his money to raise an army against victorious Prussia, Bismarck, with the consent of the Diet, sequestrated the private property of the royal Hanoverians a second time, pleading that its annual interest was needed to ward off the Guelph party's secret intrigues and stratagems in the German and foreign press.

So the Guelph Fund became the Reptile Fund—a golden trough out of which the friends of the government, or its leading men, fed for twenty-six years *ad libitum*,[1] there being no public accounting, the Chancellor laying a list of disbursements before his Majesty at the end of each year, after which act the receipts were destroyed.

When, a year or so after Bismarck's dismissal, the Kaiser desired to re-establish agreeable relations with Queen Victoria, he instructed Caprivi to offer restoration of the Guelph Fund on condition that the Duke of Cumberland formally renounced his rights to the crown. The stipulation was accepted—to William's great surprise, it is said—but as an offset, the fatal string was brought into play a second time, and not the fortune itself; its annual interest only was handed over to his Royal

[1] Among other things, the Duke of Cumberland was made to pay the debts of Minister von Boetticher's father-in-law.

Highness at Gmunden. Court gossip fixes upon the Kaiser's unwillingness to give up so large a fortune to which he might have recourse occasionally (his own inheritance of forty million marks having been squandered within four years after his father's death) as the principal cause of this renewed breach of faith, but, quite naturally, no one has ever been able to verify this statement. Nor do I know of a person who succeeded in tracing even a solitary million on its way to the Kaiser's pockets from the Wilhelmsplatz or Festungsgraben, where the Ministries of Finance for the Reich and Prussia are located. The only parties in possession of the true facts are, besides the Emperor, Count Caprivi, Prince Hohenlohe, Herr von Miquel, Minister of Finance, and Baron Wedell, Minister of the Royal House, and neither of these gentlemen is in the habit of giving away his master's secrets to ladies of the Court. Duke Günther, on the other hand, if his allusions are not attempts at beating about the bush in the hope of entrapping the game he is after, may have got an inkling of the affair through his sister, the Empress, who can keep nothing from him, or from his relatives in Vienna, notably the Princess Philip of Coburg, who in her turn probably received the news from the Duke of Cumberland himself, though the latter's authority might well be questioned, unless it grounds upon exact data given out at Marlborough House. The heir to the English crown, you must know, sometimes has earlier and closer information about matters concerning the Berlin Court than anybody connected with it, for he is, above all, the confidant of the Empress Frederick, while the Princess keeps him posted on everything that transpires at the Courts of St. Petersburg, Copenhagen, and Athens, those centres of anti-Prussian, if not anti-Wilhelm, politics. Under these circumstances, the feeling of self-satisfied prognostication that swelled the bosom of the knowing ones may well be imagined, when, in the spring of 1897 (almost three years after the reported talk between Duke Günther and Prince Stolberg), the following story went the rounds at the Neues Palais:

The Prince of Wales, it was whispered, had written a letter to King George informing him that the Kaiser *gulped* down (that was the word employed) the whole of the Guelph Fund, advising his brother-in-law at the same time to use the information as he saw fit (Greece was then hard pushed by William), but, unfortunately, "Uncle Bertie," instead of sending it to Athens direct, forwarded his missive to Copenhagen for approval by his mother-in-law, and Queen Louise, most innocently you may be sure, caused the noble conspiracy to leak out. For, in a burst of confidence, her Majesty showed the letter to Princess Valdemar, the same sprightly daughter of La Belle France who stirred up the imbroglio between Bismarck and Czar Alexander not so many years ago.

That Marie d'Orleans-Bourbon, on her part, was unable to constrain her triumph at the hope of seeing Germany's Kaiser humiliated, is, perhaps, not to be wondered at, for her Royal Highness detests the Emperor as heartily as she adores France. So, with true feminine acumen, she sat down and telegraphed the sweet morsel broadcast to all royal Wilhelm-haters, or Princes that she considered sympathisers, and all wished the undertaking Godspeed — all except Cousin Ferdinand of Bulgaria. This queer individual, eager to oblige the Kaiser, is said to have betrayed the confidence reposed in him, and informed his Majesty, hoping thereby to gain William's eternal gratitude.

The rest is soon told. William's threat to openly place himself on the Sultan's side, conveyed in a personal letter to King Christian, which, strange to say, was countersigned by Prince Hohenlohe, made the would-be conspirators scatter in all directions, and immediately upon its receipt at the Danish Court, Albert Edward's message to the King of the Hellenes was given to the flames in the presence of the German Minister. Thereupon the diplomatic side of the incident was declared closed, yet to his Uncle Bertie the Kaiser is said to have written a furious letter intimating that he would demand a personal explanation from him during his—the Prince's

—summer visit to Homburg,—a menace which, apparently, did not disturb his Royal Highness in the least, for, instead of a direct reply, there arrived at the Neues Palais, a week or ten days later, a newspaper clipping, under seal of Marlborough House, announcing that in the coming season his Royal Highness intended to take the waters of Marienbad; and on the margin was scribbled in German an inelegant, but whole-souled, invitation to the imperial nephew, the like of which has once before been extended to a German Emperor, namely, by Goetz von Berlichingen, who answered Maximilian the First's order to surrender in the same vulgar fashion.

The Guelph Fund story, as intimated, is palace gossip, no more, no less,—gossip that originates with the ladies and gentlemen in attendance upon their Majesties, no one knows exactly how. Countess B—— happens to learn of an important secret event through her Majesty's ill-temper or confidences, and, again, a hint may be dropped at dinner or supper *coram nobis* by the Kaiser himself, whose tongue not infrequently runs away with his head. To-day one of the Emperor's adjutants may have a good story to relate that, without involving a breach of faith on the gentleman's part, gives the key to a perplexing situation, while letters from other courts, the tattle of princely visitors, correspondence of high aristocrats or statesmen, a ministerial crisis, a sudden lapse in the routine of royal employment, as a visit postponed or a "headache to order," complete the chain of evidence that linked together of its own accord, as it were, and in the end reveals hidden springs of action and private views and motives of individuals affording a better analysis of the minds of historic personages than a whole library of ordinary contemporaneous accounts, written by mere outside spectators, who faithfully copied each other.

I repeat, I cannot vouch for the truth of the Guelph Fund report as I do for other strange facts in these volumes that came under my personal observation, for all the evidence I was able to collect on that point is of the hearsay variety—and there are very good reasons

why this should be so; but I have, besides, one strong bit of circumstantial evidence: Prince Hohenlohe has been holding office against his will for three years or longer because he cannot step out until the Guelph Fund affair is settled, that is, until the capital of that great fortune is once more intact. This I have from an authoritative source.

We now return to the *Koenig Wilhelm* despatch. While the press of the entire world was engaged in a heated discussion as to the genuineness or the apocryphal character of the message, his Majesty enjoyed himself hugely at the commotion he had caused.

"*Der Hieb hat gesessen*" (that was a blow from the shoulder), are words he addressed to every visitor at Court in those days, without prefacing his extraordinary remark by even an allusion to the matter he had in mind. And to General von Buddenbrock, the same gentleman whose hussars were decimated at Josefstadt (in 1866) by Prussian batteries, he said: "Of course the telegram is authentic. Why should I not tell my brother what I think of those scamps? Though I care not to abuse them face to face when they are guests at my house, I propose to speak my mind privately," and, anticipating his Excellency's question, whether the publication had been intentional or not, he continued: "I am right glad, too, my brother made use of my words promptly and without sentimental ado."

Here we have almost as many contradictions as sentences: Personally his Majesty does not want to insult the Reichstag; his denunciations were of a private nature, and he wishes them proclaimed from the house-tops! Whether such a state of mind indicates merely morbid impulsiveness, or a dangerous confusion of sentiments and ideas, is a question I asked of a renowned medical professor of the Berlin University, one of the late Emperor's physicians, who occasionally visits the Schloss. The great man weighed the matter in his mind for a few moments, and then replied evasively:

"One riddle is worth another, Madame la Comtesse. I am told that on the day of Princess Victoria, the

present Empress's, ceremonious entry into the capital,[1] the Kaiser, then Prince William, marched his battalion of infantry from Potsdam to Berlin (a distance of twenty miles) for the avowed purpose of startling his bride by his prowess. On the road, many of the soldiers became exhausted, but the captain, who was on horseback, as a matter of course, arrived in first-class condition, and ever since has been boasting of this particular feat—'a *par force* march on the wedding eve.' Now, as a matter of fact, William did not walk ten paces on that occasion, and, furthermore, the thing came off fully twenty-four hours before his bride's garter was distributed. The Kaiser's boast of 'planting his victorious standard upon the fortress after a Sheridan's ride,' is, therefore, as unwarrantable as it is ridiculous. Still, this is one of his stock anecdotes which he relates at all weddings graced by the imperial presence.

"In this case," concluded the great physician, "impulsiveness, the spontaneous desire to do something extraordinary, doubtless led to the conception of the idea —the rest is utter confusion."

Certain members of the opposition have characterised the Kaiser's action (in June, 1897) of ordering the Königsberg pioneers to make for him a number of improvements in Theerbude forest by building cottages and sheds as "confounding mine and thine," and "as malfeasance worthy of a satrap who recognises no distinction between the state's and his own individual resources"; but this exploit, though calling in question his boasted concern for the working-classes, did his Majesty less harm with the Germans than his refusal, a month or so after the awful holocaust of royal and aristocratic women at the Paris bazaar, to extend a helping hand to the victims of the great floods in Würtemberg. For the foreigners "his" *Dispositionsfond* yielded promptly a four-nought contribution, together with a hysterical telegram of condolence; the South German allies, who contribute toward the fund, got neither money nor sympathy, and in consequence the mail of both their Majesties was

[1] February 26, 1881.

again heavy with anonymous letters, some of them illustrated.

Such caricatures! Among others was a cartoon, in colours, that represented the Kaiser kneeling before the bed of Madame la République, and pouring gold into her naked lap out of a bag marked "The *Reich's Dispositionsfond* for the benefit of German Veterans, Widows, and Orphans," and almost every one of the nameless correspondents pointed out that the Emperor had never been guilty of a generous act lacking in theatrical possibilities. Still, the worst feature of these letters was their origin. They were evidently not of the scandal-mongering sort, of which mention has been made, but expressions of righteous indignation, of honest opinion, forced to anonymity by the prevailing draconic laws against *lèse-majesté*.

"What a blessing these people calculate but one-half of the truth," I thought, when the Empress turned some of the epistles and cartoons over to me, that I might help her shudder "at a nation's ingratitude." If, like myself, they had heard William say, after mailing "his" ten-thousand-franc cheque—their money—to the French capital: "That brings me nearer to Paris a hundred miles; if such opportunities continue, they will send a special train to Berlin to carry me to their Exposition," the rage of these critics might have assumed a more dangerous form than the one adopted.

There is, after all, more method in the secrecy that hedges round a throne, and likewise a greater amount of shrewd circumspection in the publicity accorded to a King's words and actions by paid and voluntary scribes, than most people imagine. In May, 1897, for instance, all the newspapers commented upon some rather trite remarks the Kaiser had made in Wiesbaden about so-called charity bazaars, "whose receipts are eaten up by the cost of the entertainment, and where the poor are cheated." These observations were heralded as something entirely new, and when, a month or so afterward, the Empress announced a flower corso for the benefit of the Potsdam "*Krippe*," and invited society on condition

that, in obedience to his Majesty's wishes, the decorations be less lavish than usual, while the money thus saved be handed over for the charitable object in view, Court-marshal Count Eulenburg, as well as we ladies, who have more or less to do with the Kaiserin's toilet, expected to receive orders to keep the preparations for the festival within certain limits. But the very opposite happened. Auguste Victoria selected the costliest of all the Vienna toilets proposed, a superb cream-coloured gown, and instead of going out in two coaches, as formerly, four were placed into service for the royal family, not counting those of the Court-marshals, equerries, chamberlains, and dames of the palace.

At the corso, which was held in Potsdam, near the "Russian colony," her Majesty's carriage, containing, besides herself, Prince Joachim and her little daughter, was nearly hidden under a load of Maréchal Niel roses, imported from France and Holland at a tremendous outlay; the Princes Adalbert, Augustus Wilhelm, and Oscar rode in a landau lavishly decorated with white carnations, the Crown Prince and Prince Eitel Fritz in a phaeton made gay by ten thousand red pinks and ribbons, and the floral embellishments of the Kaiser's coach represented the colours of Schleswig-Holstein.

The other royal and aristocratic participants in the pageant had likewise taken care to shine by sovereign disregard of the imperial injunction against extravagance, but to their credit it must be said that nearly all of them sent very considerable sums to the "*Krippe*" next day, "savings out of our decoration fund," as their perfumed missives to the august lady-protector modestly declared.

And their Majesties? William and his Queen had no occasion to remember their high-sounding proclamations, seeing that a purveyor's bill of several thousand marks for the embellishment of the royal carriages was staring in their faces. Heretofore royal gardeners had attended to the corso decorations, there being always an abundance of flowers in our parks and hothouses; but, with that contrariness which now and again distinguishes

the Kaiser's actions, he ordered that the work be entusted to a high-priced Berlin florist, at the very instant when saving was the prime object of the hour.

Hence tears and lamentations in the Empress's apartments, most unroyal frowns on the Kaiser's brow, while the papers were echoing both Majesties' praises for arranging charity entertainments, "every participant of which contributes to the benefit."

The "*Krippe*" got nothing from the Neues Palais that season, but what matters that so long as the press applauds?

CHAPTER X

THE EMPEROR'S LOVE OF SHOOTING—HIS BOON COMPANIONS

WHILE his Majesty inflicts his costly presence upon the nobles and rich officials of Berlin and Potsdam according to his whims and preferences for society, and following the course of such events as birthdays, weddings, housewarmings and similar domestic affairs in the families of the aristocracy, his visits to the hunting-grounds of friends in all parts of Germany are matters of routine, as he looks upon the utilisation of the country's preserves as a regalism in the old feudal sense, as his sovereign right.

When his Majesty goes to a shooting, he seldom stays longer than two days, the cost of his entertainment being between forty and fifty thousand marks, and one need but glance at the preparations on the host's part to appreciate the enormity of the outlay, which, moreover, is vastly larger at the first visit. The country residences of our Prussian grandees, you must know, are, as a general thing, quite innocent of sanitary arrangements, and often several rooms must be entirely rebuilt and furnished with running water before his Majesty will set foot in the house. Now, an unsophisticated reader might think that to plead old-fashionedness would scare away William and save one's money, but that is a wild miscalculation. If the Emperor scents a full game-bag on any baronial domain, he will invite himself to the feast *sans phrase*, and not until all arrangements have been completed, and when it is too late to raise objections of the nature intimated, does the Court-marshal put in the

standing claims of his master: A bedroom similar in all respects as to size and appointments to the Kaiser's own chamber at home, brass bedstead, horsehair mattress, an enormous wash-stand, windows and doors secured by endless numbers of curtains and—here comes the rub—a connecting-room with the latest paraphernalia of the bath.

"Mark Twain has written many funny things about the German and his tub, or the absence of the latter," said Court-marshal Count Eulenburg to me, after meeting the American humourist at a dinner given by General Verdy du Vernois in the winter of 1891; "but he could surpass himself if I were free to give him only part of the correspondence I have had with our nobility on the subject of providing adequate bathing requisites for his Majesty. How they struggle and twist and squirm against the introduction of this *novelty*, which, they claim, would destroy the harmonious appearance of rooms that for three hundred years were untouched by the mode. One gentleman, in the province of Prussia, tried to evade the abnoxious obligation by impudently suggesting that he dared not offer his Majesty a bath after one night's journey, as it involved the insinuation of excessive dirtiness on his guest's part.

"While I sympathise with many of his Majesty's hosts, who can ill afford to entertain the most luxurious monarch of the age," continued the good-natured grand-master, "I am as adamant as the proverbial *rocher de bronze* when asked to tolerate aristocratic principles of that sort. If the Kaiser's travels served no other purpose than that of promoting cleanliness, his time would be well spent."

Subscribed and agreed to, *Herr Graf*, but these so-called *novelties* are really the least costly items of an imperial visit, even if Berlin plumbers have to be imported into remote corners of the kingdom to execute your commands. Luxurious bedroom furnishings, the carpeting throughout of spacious country residences, sometimes ordered if William honours one of his subjects in midwinter, are items of expenditure of far

greater magnitude, though scarcely the beginning of the end.

I do not agree with a certain Pomeranian squire who complained that the Emperor's first visit cost him twenty thousand marks more than Prince Pless paid for the pleasure of harbouring the sovereign because he had to build a carriage-road to the railway station, ten miles off, —that highway will endure and benefit coming generations when the Baron "and the proudest" (and costliest) "moment of his life" are long forgotten; but to force one's entertainer to provide a four-in-hand—one of the implied conditions of every royal visit—comes dangerously near sowing the seeds of extravagance.

And those Potemkin villages! That nothing may grate upon the imperial feelings, the *Herr Graf* or *Fuerst* compels his peasants to whitewash and paint farmhouse and hovel for miles around and sometimes pays for the beautifying out of his own pocket. Furthermore, he must furnish greens and flags to decorate the streets, engage numerous torch-bearers to light up the highway on the eve of the arrival and during the nights of the visit, and employ four hundred to five hundred beaters, at the very least, a week or longer. For his Majesty is not content to shoot the game on his friend's domain; his host, if he loves his peace, will hire all the hare, deer, or roe for a dozen German miles in the neighbourhood and let them be driven into his own preserves. Of course, the dislodged game does not remain voluntarily in its new environment, and must be kept from running away by continuous beating up; sometimes, too, great numbers are trapped in other parts of the province and carried to and kept in thickets on the spot selected for the chase, to be released when the great slaughter is at its height.

While outside preparations of this kind eat up tens of thousands, those for the inner man are not less costly. The Kaiser seldom brings fewer than twenty gentlemen, and even more servants, all of whom must be lodged and fed and horsed, and do not forget that a royal flunky in a strange house pretends to be almost as much as his master. Treated *à la Kommiss*, after the barrack regimen

at home, he impudently demands the best of everything when stopping elsewhere, and generally succeeds in obtaining it.

That for the Emperor himself and his titled *entourage* nothing is too good that money can procure, goes without saying. The great caterers of Berlin and Paris send their choicest wares beforehand, all the delicacies of the season, and the next to follow; under the load of mighty barrels branded in many languages, groan the ancient cellar-beds of oaken beams, and mysterious bottles with dirty labels tell of old vintages and lynx-eyed connoisseurs, while the family cook, who is good enough all the year round, is dislodged to make room for experts in every known branch of culinary art, "lent" by the great hotels and world-famed restaurants of the capital.

And what says William to this splendid hospitality, this lavish, almost reckless, expenditure for his benefit?

If everything go off according to programme, if game be plentiful, the weather fine, his bath and the cooking better than at his own house, he will remark, on leaving: "Be assured, *gnädige Frau*," or —— (naming the host without prefix of courtesy or title), "I have enjoyed myself exceedingly; and if one thing gave me more pleasure than the other, it was the fact that you made no fuss, asked the Kaiser to take pot-luck with you, so to speak. That is as it should be. Like *Eberhardt im Barte*, I desire to be free to visit my people without causing them the least trouble or expense."

But if weather or wind, the elements above or those below (in the kitchen), go against the imperial grain, if the populace's shouts of welcome do not seem hearty or loud enough, or if one of the other guests exhibits greater skill in bringing down game than the Emperor, William simply orders his carriage, drives back to the house, and goes to bed. That has happened in the course of years once or twice at each of the baronial seats visited, for, if one may say so without committing *crimen læsæ Majestatis*, there are still some things completely oblivious to his Majesty's claims of omnipotence—game and guns.

"Moderation, the virtue of which Princes stand in

such urgent need, is never found in passionate hunters, who experience an irresistible impulse to pursue the game and a cruel and bloody delight in killing." This passage in her Majesty's copy of Frederick the Great's "Antimacchiavell,"[1] which the young Princes are allowed to handle freely, is hidden, the margin of the page containing it being pasted to the next, as if by accident.

And not satisfied with indulging his passion in the field, the Kaiser must needs surround himself at all times with trophies of his skill as a death-giver; the most prominent object in his study is a long table, covered with green cloth, containing the antlers of the roebucks killed by him in the course of the year, while under the table, and all around on the floor, are the bigger antlers of slain deer. Ministers of State delivering reports upon the reception of which hinges the fate of government measures, of peace or war, or, perchance, the life of some doomed man appealing to the King's grace, must be for ever prepared to be interrupted by a "Look at this ten" (or fourteen) "'ender'" (meaning antlers with the given number of branches)—"the prime stag among a battalion I mowed down at Rominton."

While the members of his Majesty's staff assert that the monarch is never in better humour than after successfully playing some trick upon a friend, it shall not be denied that he is very agreeable company if he has half a mind to be. He loves a merry jest at a stag party, knows the art of making pleasant conversation, sings, badly, it is true, but nevertheless entertainingly enough among friends; enjoys good music, and is a clever hand at any game—billiards, skat, poker, and what-not? and, better still, he never allows the stakes to go above a pfennig (half a farthing) a point. If Diana has smiled upon him, and the host showed a lucky hand in the selection of the menu, he usually orders his portfolio of photographs to be brought in after dinner, and, leaving everybody a choice of pictures, inscribes his name,

[1] Her Majesty's private library consists of the works of Frederick the Great, those of Moltke, in German and English, a Bible, and a few pious books.

together with the date, and often some cheerful words of remembrance, on a dozen or half a hundred pasteboards, as the case might be.

Aside from his hunting companions, his Majesty has few friends and no intimates. Though Herr von Helldorff, Baron Manteuffel, and Count Douglas are sometimes so designated, there is nothing in their relations to his Majesty to justify the assumption. At the palace the triumvirate is called "the Kaiser's most submissive political General Staff," because William uses these gentlemen as cat's-paws sometimes, as clubs on other occasions, when the conservatives cannot be brought to book in any legitimate way. They breakfast or dine at Court quite frequently, and are favourably regarded by the Empress, but on the whole their reception, while never lacking in cordiality, is official in character. Conforming to Chesterfield's advice, these gentlemen "made themselves necessary," but the Kaiser is not always eager to do business, as the record of his occupations mentioned in another chapter shows. Herr von Helldorff, besides, has somewhat lost caste since his Majesty adopted his vacillating policy in respect to Bismarck. During the first three months of the year 1890, while the old Chancellor was kept away from Berlin through all sorts of machinations that made it patent to everybody at Court that he was about to be shelved (his son Herbert was the only one who failed to understand the situation),—while these intrigues were being spun, Herr von Helldorf was a daily visitor at the palace, and, to judge from remarks the Empress let fall in our circle off and on, he played a decisive part in the conspiracy that discrowned the great man. Whether he informed the Emperor that Bismarck had become addicted to morphia and was unable to think connectedly, I cannot tell, but his Majesty mentioned the rumour at luncheon one day after having been closeted with both the agrarian chieftain and Dr. Hinzpeter the whole morning. The Kaiser's old preceptor Hinzpeter, by the way, was never so prominent at Court as when Bismarck's star was on the wane. We saw him flit in and out of the Kaiser's study

at all times of the day and in the evening, and quite often he installed himself in his Majesty's apartments as early as eight o'clock in the morning, even before William had breakfasted. But this friendship was too thick to last, the more so as Dr. Hinzpeter himself placed a stumbling-block in the way of his ambition to live at Court by his marriage to Mademoiselle d'Harcourt, ex-governess to the Emperor's sisters. So Hinzpeter was packed off to Bielefeld, and the castle and Neues Palais knew him no more.

Until the spring of 1892, Judicial Councillor Kunze was another of the Kaiser's untitled friends, and he had, perhaps, more influence over William than all the rest, seeing that he aspired to become his Majesty's *Hofjude*, or financial agent. Kunze manipulated the ruinous Schloss Freiheit Lottery, mentioned in the eighth chapter, and was at the bottom of the colossal building projects, having a game of some sort *in petto* to meet each proposed extravagance. However, as soon as these schemes threatened to compromise the Kaiser, their plebeian advocate was dropped as a "designing and even dangerous person," and since then I have seen William pass his old-time friend, who was half-doubled up by the most submissive of bows, without taking the slightest notice of him. That does not signify, however, that Kunze is lastingly disgraced. On the contrary, if the "difficulties of the exchequer" continue, he is almost sure to be restored.

Among men of his own caste and age, William has had but one intimate, the late Rudolph of Austria; but the pleasant relations between these young men, based upon mutual likes and dislikes, came to an abrupt end some four years previous to the Archduke's awful death, discord arising in the summer of 1885 when Prince and Princess William were spending several weeks at their Imperial Highnesses' country-place near Vienna. From this outing the Princess returned all of a sudden and post-haste to Potsdam, while her husband went on an impromptu tour of military inspections in the provinces.

And the reason?

Princess Philip of Coburg, sister of the Archduchess Stephanie, told me that William, returning in her brother-in-law's company from a stag party late one evening, proposed the game of *changer les dames*, which, her Royal Highness insists, is "quite common" among German officers. Rudolph is said to have been agreeable, but when William entered the Crown Princess Stephanie's room, her Imperial Highness made a tremendous uproar, causing Auguste Victoria to awake, and" (I am still quoting Princess Philip), "thus the pretty scheme was spoiled."

Next morning the young wives got together; but as each charged the other's husband with instigating the devilish plot, the happy family party was bound to break up, and their Highnesses separated without saying good-bye. Such, at least, was common report at the Court of Empress Augusta in Coblentz, where I happened to be at the time.

As for the rest, it will probably never be known which of the royal gentlemen incited the other to the act; maybe both were drunk, and agreed upon the dictum of Prussian army men: *Unter Kameraden ist's ganz egal*" (literally: "Among comrades it's the same thing)" as a good joke.

CHAPTER XI

TREATMENT OF SERVANTS BY THEIR MAJESTIES—IMPERIAL HOUSEKEEPING

NOON at the Neues Palais.

Forty hungry women and girls, some old, many young and comely, hanging about the back-stairs of what is intended for the most magnificent royal Court of the day! Most of them are munching black bread, scantily spread with lard, while from tin bottles they partake of long draughts of cold chicory masquerading under the name of coffee. One or two proudly exhibit a hunk of salt pork, but many in the crowd depend entirely upon the charity of their colleagues or the good nature of the liveried servants, who receive either full board or eat at the canteen, established in connection with the *Marstall*. And these women, wearing washed-out calico dresses all the year round and a twenty-four by forty-inch shawl barely covering their heads and breasts in winter, are imperial and royal employees, as well as her Majesty's natty maids and the porters and chasseurs in gold and silver laden dress, the only difference being that these maids and flunkies are engaged by the year, while the women are employed by the month, *i.e.* during the residence of the Court in Potsdam.

But what about the Biblical crumbs that fall from the rich man's table? There are none. The allowances for the royal board are cut so fine as to just suffice for their Majesties, the *entourage*, and the guests; and when the Kaiser invites extra company at the last moment, the courses are hurried to cover up the shortening of rations, and frequently some of the visitors are "skipped"

as if by accident. Of the royal guests, many leave the flower-strewn table as hungry as the scrub-girls do their nooks and corners after the noon recess.

The women hail from Potsdam or the surrounding villages, and work in the castle from 6 A.M. to 6 or 8 P.M., many walking an hour or more to and from their destination. They are employed in the apartments of the adjutants, of the ladies and gentlemen of the Court, in the servants' quarters, and in the kitchens, at cleaning and scrubbing, wood and water carrying, &c., but our two-hundred-room palace affords neither a place where they may cook a scanty meal nor a room where they can eat and rest.

"They get their wages—what more do they want?" answer the House-marshals, when we ladies pity the unfortunates, and we have to subside for fear that those we try to befriend may in consequence lose their livelihood—such as it is—under the protecting wing of the imperial eagle.

"They have their wages,"—two marks per day for twelve or fourteen hours' work, and even in the coldest winter—the Court seldom moves to Berlin before Christmas—cannot get a cup of coffee or a plate of soup from the crowned master, though it is self-evident that none of the women have time to go home for dinner during recess.

A person of my rank runs against this class of servants on rare occasions only; but accident leads me into the lower regions of the palace once in a while, and it gives me a shock every time to see these pariahs of our splendid Court fighting hunger and cold with food devoid of warmth, behind doors and staircases where the wind whistles the international anthem of poverty. After witnessing their distress and hearing their complaints once, I never went into the *souterrain* without issuing an order on the canteen for so and so many pea or lentil soups. The gratitude of these women is heart-rending.

When it is remembered that "the difficulties of the exchequer" occasionally interfere with the Kaiser's and Kaiserin's predilection for cleanliness—I recall the fact

that their Majesties are sometimes unable to obtain clean sheets for their bed—the statement that the royal servants, men and women, are kept exceedingly short in respect to towels and bed-clothes will surprise no one. As a matter of fact, the allowance for the first-named article is two per week; the bed-linen is changed every month. And at the same time the liveried retainers are supposed to be paragons of cleanliness!

One evening, when we were talking in her Majesty's dressing-room of the vagaries of Prince Frederick Leopold, the Countess Bassewitz remarked that his Royal Highness compelled his valets and the chasseur, who serves him at table, to bathe two or three times a day, morning, noon, and night; that is, always before they come into personal contact with him.

"That is extravagant," said her Majesty; "but persons of our rank cannot insist too strongly upon the daily bath for their attendants."

"If there are enough bath-rooms!" I could not resist the temptation to throw out this hint.

"Well," said the Kaiserin, "I suppose there is a sufficient number in *our* palaces, at least here and in the Schloss."

"I beg your Majesty's pardon," I spoke up; "here, as well as in Berlin, we have but two bath-rooms for servants—one for the men, one for the women."

The Empress gave me a startled look. "Two bath-rooms?" she gasped.

"T-w-o," I repeated; "and not only the people of the body-service, but all the liveried and uniformed men and women in the palace—coachmen, *fourriers*, chasseurs, and heads of the household departments—are expected to use them."

"*Meine Liebe*," said the Empress, in her haughtiest tone, "you are evidently misinformed," and, rising from the arm-chair, she shook off her dressing sacque with a little shudder, as if to repel an unclean sensation. "I do so hate to speak of matters of that kind," she added, dismissing us with a curt bow.

What would her Majesty have thought if I had

continued in my revelations, gathered at random during my long connection with the household, for the scarcity of bath-rooms is not the most disgraceful evidence of penury at the Prussian Court, by far. The two eighteen by thirty-six inch huckaback towels given out every Saturday must suffice for the casual bath as well as for the every-day ablutions. The servants' wash-bowls are little tin affairs, holding less than three pints; foot-tubs and pitchers are tabooed, together with other conveniences. But that is not all. The toilets for the servants are located on the back-stair landings, which are lighted by kerosene lamps day and night, and one closet must do for every twenty-six persons. If the palace is ever visited by an epidemic, the air will be laden with "I-told-you-so's" in high and low quarters.

A command of the Emperor or the Empress alone can change this disgraceful state of affairs. When a courtier draws the attention of those in authority to the matter, it is but to hear the old refrain: "No money." "All the department treasuries are empty." What, then, becomes of the fifteen millions and a half which the Kaiser reserves per annum for the maintenance of himself and family? So far as the money is not mortgaged beforehand or absorbed by the expenses for travelling, entertaining, her Majesty's toilets, the building craze and other crazes, the expenses of the Court or Courts swallow them. The Berlin Schloss, you must know, is always kept ready for immediate occupancy, all servants being at their posts and all fires lit. "See the ogre that devoured twenty-five millions!" were the damnatory words hurled at Marie Antoinette and her fat husband as the royal chariot rolled into Paris on October 6, 1789, "escorted by hunger and rascality."

Twenty-five millions!—fuel for the revolution of the end of the eighteenth century, but not a patch on the expenses of the German Court of to-day! Since William II. came to the throne, the Prussian people have paid one hundred and sixty millions of marks into the civil list, and of these, one hundred millions were expended to keep up the pageant of superficial splendour that goes

to make the Court. For one thing, the salary list is enormous, not on account of many-naughted items as much as because of its prodigious length. There are, altogether, some fifteen hundred persons on it, fully two-thirds of whom have to be clothed and fed, as well as paid. The great officials are not provided with uniforms or dress, it is true, but receive very considerable allowances for that purpose, and also table-money, if for some reason or other they are not invited to or stay away from the meals. All the employees, moreover, are entitled to mileage and board fees if taken on a junketing.

When I asked Madame von Larisch to increase the scanty allowance of linen given to my servants, the housekeeper answered: "I would like to, but cannot, as funds for labour and material in the wash-kitchen just suffice for a stipulated amount of laundry. Half-a-dozen extra towels per week would upset calculations."

"But if I furnish the soap?"

"Your Ladyship is very generous, but the employees of the wash-kitchen have all the work they can do now, and the Court-marshal's office says it is impossible to increase the staff. Besides, we have not the material in stock. When the household linen is given out on Saturdays, the presses are as empty as the proverbial nutshell."

The prevailing penury even reaches to the steps of the throne. Can you imagine an Empress being in need of a couple of toothbrush-holders? Well, Auguste Victoria wanted some for a week and longer, and could not get them. It happened in December, 1894, and I refer to it, not as something extraordinary, but merely to illustrate a point. At the time mentioned her Majesty had seen some fancy toothbrush-holders in the bedroom of her sister, Louise Sophie, wife of Prince Frederick Leopold. Her Majesty inquired where they had been bought, and, on coming home, ordered me to procure a couple. As Herr Nolte was going to Berlin, I instructed him to bring them along. Next morning, her Majesty asked why the holders had not been procured. Herr Nolte was called in. "I tried to get an order from Herr

Baron von Mirbach," reported the man, "but, there being no funds for such a purpose, he sent me to Count Eulenburg. His Excellency, despite my respectful protest, insisted that the matter must go through the usual routine, and sent me away."

"Routine—and what may that be?" asked the Empress impatiently, after Herr Nolte had been dismissed.

"The Court-marshal's office," I made answer, "will forward a letter to the store demanding an estimate of the article wanted. Then the royal porcelain manufactory will be asked whether the price is fair or not, and, that being settled, the various chiefs of departments will be required to furnish the money, each, of course, trying to 'unload' upon the other. In this way from six to ten days will be spent."

"But I will have the things to-day," said the Empress. "Notify the *fourrier* to send for them."

I did so then and there, and repeated the order every morning for an entire week, but only on the afternoon of the tenth day after her Majesty's visit of discovery in Glienecke were the holders produced. It had taken all this time to scrape together twelve marks necessary to procure the much-coveted articles, and her Majesty had made twelve separate and distinct rows about the matter.

Scenes and annoyances like the above, growing out of the chronic want of funds, are, however, not limited to demands for extraordinary expenditure. We go through the same farce every time a piece of china or glass in one of the bedrooms is broken, for the Prussian Court has no duplicates of such necessary articles as wash-pitchers, bowls, pails, soap-dishes, or water-bottles. When one of these things in the Kaiserin's chamber, for instance, is smashed, Frau Schade must carry the pieces to the *Haushofmeister*, who lays them before the House-marshal, who lays them before the Court-marshal, who lays them before the treasurer.

Then the treasurer authorises the making of an estimate to replace the articles, the two marshals countersign the document, and the *Haushofmeister* sends a

waggon into town to fetch it, or orders it sent from Berlin. Of course, all this takes time ; often several days are spent in winding and unwinding red tape, and in the interim her Majesty has to get along as best she can without a glass for her tooth-water sometimes, and on other occasions without that piece of furniture which the Duchess of Orleans described as essential to life's true comfort.

So much for our difficulties at home ; but poverty stares the German Empress in the face even when she travels with her immense suite of ladies and gentlemen in waiting, marshals, equerries, masters of the hounds, valets, chamberlains, treasurers, her overseers of the plate, gun-chargers, mouth-cooks, and the cloud of footmen, couriers, coachmen, and grooms. Ever since I can remember, the Kaiserin has never owned enough trunks to carry, besides her toilets, the linen for the imperial bed and bath rooms,[1] and that despite the fact that the Court is almost continuously on the road.

Count Herbert Bismarck, returning from a trip to England in 1892, set abroad a story that the Prince of Wales kept away from Berlin because he could not get any of his people to accompany him, which is, of course, nonsense, and was probably never intended to be taken seriously ; but it is a fact that during his Royal Highness's last official visit to our Court, in March, 1889, his employees, from valet down to groom, were constantly brawling with Herr von Liebenau on account of what they described as "starvation diet." When the typical German breakfast, consisting of coffee, milk, two rolls, a diminutive pat of butter, and two pieces of sugar, was sent in to the valet, he demanded steak and eggs in addition, and so did the footmen and grooms. These protests were treated with silent contempt by Herr von Liebenau, but when the noon meal called for similar criticisms, he threatened to inform his Royal Highness of the men's "unruly behaviour."

"By all means, do so," replied the Englishmen ; "that

[1] Her Majesty always carries an entire outfit of household linen along with her on her travels, unless she is visiting royalty.

is what we want. Our master will then engage board for us at a hotel. That is the kind of gentleman he is."

And so the battle waged merrily on; only one bottle of beer was allowed to the foreigners, and they asked permission to provide their own drinks; they refused to eat cold pork and potato-salad for supper, and when told that it was her Majesty's favourite dish, their remarks approached dangerously near to *lèse-majesté*. Altogether Albert Edward's men had a very hard time of it at the Schloss, and Herr von Liebenau cursed them, in the presence of her Majesty, "as the hungriest and most impudent set of menials" he ever encountered.

"If they stay another week," he vowed, "my whole force will be demoralised, and I should not know where to obtain money enough to fill their ravenous paunches. I beg your Majesty's pardon, but that is the only expression that fits the situation."

To conclude, confusion and red tape, extravagance and penury, go hand in hand at the Prussian Court; the preponderance of these incongruous qualities is felt in all departments of the service.

The young Princes, whom the nation furnishes with a lieutenant's salary beginning with their tenth birthday, must disburse the wages of their body-servants out of this meagre allowance; but when, a short while ago, Herr von Wedell protested against a million marks appropriation for reconstruction experiments, such as above described, the Kaiser silenced him with the words: "I thought you *liked* to be Minister of the Royal House."

CHAPTER XII

THE ANONYMOUS LETTER SCANDAL—THE VON KOTZE AFFAIR

In November, 1892, a succession of horrible anonymous letters threw consternation into our Court circles. Almost no one was spared. Every one, or nearly every one, holding official or personal relations with their Majesties, as well as the Emperor and Auguste Victoria herself, was made the target of the vilest insinuations. To put the dots on the i's, as the French say, I should certainly have to borrow the phraseology of Dr. von Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia sexualis* and some of the vile language used in the prison-wards of the *Salpêtrière*. The writer seemed to have access to a library containing minute descriptions of all the viciousness enacted since the time when Jupiter loved Ganymede, Queen Semiramis made love to a horse, and Cæsar "was regarded as the husband of all wives and the wife of all husbands." And with this encyclopædia of wickedness at his elbow, he selected to-day one abominable morsel, in a week's time another, ten days later a third, shaped them into direct and distinct charges, and launched them forth against this or that unhappy woman in succession.

Four hundred of those anonymous communications had been surrendered to the prosecution, headed by the late Baron von Richthofen. That number probably comprised the fifth part of the letters actually distributed. The overwhelming majority of the recipients were ashamed to acknowledge the fact, as the correspondent was in the habit of trotting out old and long-forgotten

skeletons, mauling over half-healed sores, and telling of nasty or dishonourable actions, some of them true, others invented. And who would blame a person, so vilely attacked, for giving the poisonous rag to the flames without calling a jury to sit on the contents? No matter how far-fetched the charge, and how conclusive its refutation, some little thing—the shadow of a doubt—always cleaves to the accused innocent. Besides, in matters where family honour is concerned, loyalty, like charity, begins at home. Once, when his Majesty was railing against a friend of his sister Charlotte, who flatly refused to turn over to Baron Richthofen an anonymous letter, I took the liberty of pointing out this maxim to him.

"I know of one loyalty only—that to the King of Prussia," was William's stern rejoinder.

Magnificently said, your Majesty, but, seeing that the King of Prussia, the present incumbent of the title at least, thinks himself so far above criticism as to be alike invulnerable to calumny and to just accusations, why should his subjects risk their character to help him to run down a traducer whose power for evil he denies? And again: the correspondence did not always concern the person addressed, but frequently related to the passions, the failings, or the misfortunes of others—an intimate or an enemy. "It would be a felony to turn this letter over to the police, or even to disclose its contents to *you*," said my colleague, Countess Bassewitz, one morning when I was in her apartment and the lackey, who had gone to the porter for her mail, brought in one of the abhorred communications. And her little Ladyship threw the thing, scarcely read, into the fire.

I tried to stop her. "His Majesty, who is sure to learn of the arrival of the missive, may ask you for it at luncheon," I expostulated.

"He cannot, for he has just started on the way to Liebenberg, and if he did, I would resist him, for the letter contained the vilest charge that can be brought against a married woman and her best friend's husband. And all the parties, all four of them, I count among my closest acquaintances!"

The *anonymous* writer sometimes told truths with terrible directness; at other times he delivered himself of a *mixtum compositum* of the Simon Pure and of fancies that made it difficult to separate the grain from the chaff; occasionally he would sacrifice a pure girl to his ribald appetite for mischief-making. Yet courtier after courtier was deservedly dragged to the pillory. Indeed, Montesquieu's characterisation of society under Louis XIV. and Louis XV. as "ambition allied to idleness, baseness wedded to haughtiness; as the incarnation of the desire to become rich without work; as lickspittleness; as hatred of truth; traitorship and perfidiousness; as sophism, and contempt for public duties; as fear of virtuous princes, and as interest in the King's vices," —this terrible indictment fits our present conditions as if it had been written yesterday, instead of a hundred and fifty years ago. And how could it be otherwise? William's surpassing weaknesses—limitless vanity, despotic inclinations, and unrestrained egotism—are echoes of the "*l'état, c'est moi*" and "*après nous le déluge*" theories of centuries ago—albeit more authentic—and it is death for a courtier, or for a minister of state, not to cater to these idiosyncrasies. Besides, the German noble and idle classes are not one whit better, in point of morality, than those of England, of France, or Russia. In one respect they are worse, I think: they are, without exception, infinite tattlers. Though flattering myself with the endowment of fair capacities of observation, and though I keep my eyes open as I go along, Berlin society women, I confess, have frequently astonished me by information concerning my master and mistress that I would never dream of noticing, though the affairs mentioned happened under my very nose. And Kaiser and Kaiserin are as bad as the rest. All memoirs of royalty agree that august personages are impassioned gatherers of small gossip; the two Napoleons, the Alexanders, the great Frederick, Joseph II. and Louis XV., the Regents of France and of Great Britain,—all had their Poellnitzes and Fouchés, but inherent craftiness, at the same time, kept them from compromising

their own thoughts or the conclusions they drew from the information received. My mistress is perhaps too little sophisticated to follow these examples; besides, being a lonely woman, she feels the necessity of an exchange of thoughts. With the Emperor, it is impulsiveness that gets the better of his dignity all the time. His faculties of conception act like piston-rods driven by a powerful engine—in perpetual motion, as it were—and he can never resist the temptation to inform those around him of the current of his ideas. When he decides to change an old friend for a new, to dismiss one official or advance another, he wants all the world to know it; he wants to strike terror to, or evoke surprise in, the hearts of the whole people.

The campaign of defamation in question has been laid at the doors of a duo, a male and female. Undoubtedly two persons of opposite sexes—the female in the lead, so far as actual work was concerned—started the crusade, and to that pair belongs the discredit of having plunged a score of innocent people, among them half-grown boys and girls, into wretchedness; but they did not remain alone in this business long. Their example bred a host of imitators. At the New Year's reception of 1894, one of the party conveying the Empress Frederick's congratulations told me her Majesty had said that one-half of the Court society was now writing anonymous letters to the other half, and *vice versâ*, and for that reason she would never again live in Berlin for any length of time. And that was not merely one of her Majesty's pungent Briticisms that pass for *mots* in Berlin, but the sober truth. Not only was the number of missives sent out beyond the physical power of two pairs of hands, even admitting that one of them wielded a typewriter with all the paraphernalia of carbons and stylus-pens,—the range of topics touched upon was too varied and comprehensive for any brace of scoundrels to handle. Their Majesties' doings and the carryings-on of the Hohenaus and Kotzes were of course public property, so to speak, in our circle; to comment on their actions was easy enough; but that

the intimate affairs of the von Müllers, the von Schultzes, and the von Meyers[1] were treated with equal alacrity proved that the passion for epistolary blackguardism had become contagious, and that the Emperor's mother was right, or pretty nearly right. If the genius of Anarchy had started out to destroy the nation's great by carrying discord and hatred into their midst and by setting one powerful family against the other, he could not have assailed the natural opponents of lawlessness with greater prospect of certainty and despatch. But while all suffered under the reign of terror—the guillotining, the fusillading, and *noyading* of reputations—none underwent crueller torments at the hands of the vilifier than Auguste Victoria and her cousin morganatic. I must admit, though, that her Majesty's chagrin at the initial letters was not of long duration. Their form, of course, nauseated the woman, and their text wounded the wife in her, but the baseness of the undertaking itself did not seem to impress the sovereign lady, and from the very beginning she was of opinion that the perpetrator would, nay, must, escape. I often had it on my tongue to inquire into the reason for this assumption, but etiquette forbade.

In the beginning of 1894, when hundreds of pens were busy composing scurrilous notes, my mistress received several missives that completely unnerved her, although their contents did not refer to escapades on the part of the Emperor, but, on the other hand, were inventions so stupid as to be almost pitiable. I dare hint at only one of the lot—a photograph representing a naked female with her Majesty's face and features, and at her side Court-chaplain Stoecker in *puris naturalibus*, save for his well-known clerical bib. The letter that accompanied this beastly cartoon purported to explain why Charles the Ninth's soldiers called the biggest cannon the French boasted of "*La Reine Mère.*"[2]

[1] Names that in Germany are as common as Brown and Smith in English-speaking countries.

[2] The Queen-Mother referred to was Catherine de Medici, notorious for her amorous adventures.

This reflection upon her platonic friendship for the bigoted and ambitious parson threw my poor mistress into a fever from which she recovered only after a week or ten days, when the Kaiser's silence demonstrated that he had not been treated to a facsimile of the cartoon. As a matter of fact, though, the copy intended for William had been intercepted by General von Scholl, who, without telling what he knew, persuaded the Empress, in the course of time, to drop Stoecker and forego all interference on his behalf. So the *anonymous* became indirectly responsible for the complete annihilation of the once puissant preacher.

But while the highest in the land were pestered, their closest friends did not escape, particularly the women who were just then fighting for supremacy in William's affections. Indeed, the letter-writing fiend was responsible for most of the occasional spats between Countess Fritz and Madame von Kotze, for he kept each rival posted on the other's triumphs or discomforts. To-day Madame von Kotze was apprised that Fritz Hohenau did not pay for *all* the diamonds his wife wore at the *Grand Cour*, and to-morrow Charlotte had it, on the best of authority, that William was more than Godfather to her Excellency's infant. And the photographic assaults these pretty ladies suffered! Countess Fritz as Sporus beloved by Cæsar was one of the milder cartoons.

The letters and pictures addressed to these parties were turned over to Baron von Richthofen, and a royal *auditeur* was especially charged with collecting evidence in the matter, he, like the President of Police, being vested with the power of *inquirendo*. Like the *mouchard* of the French-detective story, this worthy was always "on the trail" of the villain, but never approached near enough to lay hands on him, at least not on the right party. Lastly, the Kaiser engaged Herr von Tausch, his own *press-cossack*,[1] to act as *rechercheur* under his personal guidance, and to the discretion of this trio the members of the royal family, the *entourage*, and

[1] The German for press-agent.

everybody associated with our Court and the highest ministerial circles were delivered up, bound hand and foot, and gagged besides, if you please.

That one's letters were committed to the inquisitorial board was really one of the minor hardships; the oral examinations were odious, though conducted in a dignified manner, but not infrequently part of the evidence became public property, viz.: when Herr von Tausch thought it well to give information to the press, and such bad faith was intolerable. It was this disloyal policy—a freak developed by William's Lombroso studies—that drove so many great families to withdraw from Court. The princely houses of Stolberg and Carolath, the Duke of Sagan, Herr von Tiele-Winckler, the Maltzans, Perponchers, Harrachs and others had no ambition to see their palaces fired so that William might boil a couple of eggs in the ashes of their good name.

For the whole inquiry, strictly speaking, turned on the everlasting theme of "insult to Majesty."

"*Eine Rotte vaterlandsloser Gesellen*" (a band of unpatriotic scoundrels)—his Majesty's favourite term for characterising his enemies—had dared to carry its intrigues to the steps of the throne (William would never admit that they had invaded his very bedroom); *ergo*, all society must rise to rid him of these nuisances. That the paladins upon whom he called were quite busy defending their own firesides, and were forced to leave their families unprotected while they followed his invitation; that, moreover, by placing their correspondence at his disposal, they jeopardised their wives' and daughters' fair names, their own and their sons' honour—what mattered that? Somebody had interfered with the master's pleasure; it was in the nature of things that everybody else should suffer. Besides, there had arisen a contingency, the existence of which was suspected by a few in the inner circle only: the authorship of many letters, especially those sent out the first twelvemonth, had been traced to a member of the royal family. If one or more of his imitators were

brought to bay, the tracks of the original *anonymous* could be covered up for good.

During all this time the intrigues between his Majesty's favourites, females and males, and between the English and anti-English factions at Court, continued, and naturally, Countess Fritz and Madame von Kotze stood in the first battle line. They fought separately and individually. It was a private feud, though, as the husbands of both women were counted Anglomaniacs. As for William, he was strictly impartial. Enjoying the good things both Herr von Kotze and the younger Hohenau provided for his delectation, he honoured both gentlemen with his distinguished friendship, possibly giving to the Kotze *ménage* the benefit of his company more often than to the other, for purely personal reasons. Kotze, you must know, is the very type of a man after William's heart. In his agile and pleasing presence he combines von Hahnke's suppleness with von Plessen's devotion to duty and von Scholl's *bonhomie*. There probably never was an hour in his life, full of airy nothingnesses, when he would not have risked his soul for the King. He gave his services to the Court gratis, and spent hundreds of thousands per annum to entertain his Majesty. In short, he lived for the royal master only. I remember meeting him *Unter den Linden* one fine morning, his cousin, Count Haeseler, commander of the Fifteenth Army Corps, being my escort.

"My dear Leberecht," cried the General, after the usual greetings, "why, by all the saints, do you wear a grass-green cravat?"

"You forget, cousin," replied Kotze, with an injured look, "a green cravat is most appropriate to-day. His Majesty went a-hunting this morning."

And all of a sudden it was whispered that this humble servant of the fetich royal—he who would have worn *couleur de caca de Prince Royal* with as much avidity as *couleur de chasse*—the amiable *viveur*, distinguished comrade, officer of splendid record for integrity and loyalty,—it was rumoured that this man,

noted for a certain amount of horse-sense, but an ignoramus on all topics unconnected with the humdrum existence of a man of fashion,—that Kotze, who was no more addicted to the pen than to overalls, was the anonymous graphomaniac for whom we had been searching so long. One fine morning the report was on everybody's lips,—no one knew who first uttered the calumny.

It was Hervey, author of "Memoirs of the Court of George II.," who gave form to the truism:

> "Slander, that worst of poisons, ever finds
> An easy entrance to ignoble minds,"

and he had been a politician and courtier long enough to get to the root of Court intrigues. Exclamations such as: "Pst! Kotze will hear you," "I let it out to Leberecht, it will be in the anonymous letters to-morrow," became all at once as common at our Court as "your Majesty," "your Excellency," or "*gnädigeste Gräfin.*" Only in the presence of the Kaiser and Kaiserin were the accusers silent, so far as my immediate observation went, at least. Later on I learnt that the "mobbing" of Kotze started in William's most intimate circle, and, moreover, that the lying stories affecting his integrity were spread by some of the Kaiser's right-hand men in a clandestine manner. Whether his Majesty sanctioned this or not, personally he kept up a show of most gracious affection for the persecuted, and whenever my mistress hinted at the expediency of dispensing with Herr von Kotze's services, he overruled her cavils by a flood of praise for "loyal Leberecht."

"Why," he said on one of these occasions, "it would be impossible to dismiss him now. I have just reinstated him in the army. As you well know, I like to surround myself with persons of military rank, and, to facilitate this with respect to Leberecht, I made him *Rittmeister z. D.*[1] Besides, think of the scandal his fall

[1] Herr von Kotze left his regiment, the Guard Lancers, some ten years ago with the character of *chef d'Escadron a. D.*, which means "retired." The term z. D. (*zur Disposition*) infers that an officer is still connected with the army, though not in actual service, being, as it were, at the

would create. He is brother-in-law, cousin, and uncle to half the nobles of the realm,—my *Kammerherr* and my friend."

And four Sundays later, when the whole Court was assembled in the state apartments of the Schloss, awaiting their Majesties, in whose suite we were to attend the formal corner-stone-laying for the new cathedral, General von Hahnke's adjutant appeared unexpectedly in our midst, and walking up to Auguste Victoria's master of ceremony invited him to come outside. Taking the captain's entrance for the signal of their Majesties' coming (we had left them in Potsdam that morning), we ladies advanced toward the great staircase, at the head of which we saw Kotze in earnest conversation with the Chief of the Military Cabinet.

"Are you not going?" I whispered, in passing.

"No," he answered, with a strange tremor in his voice; "please make my excuses to Countess Brockdorff; I shall be detained."

Ten minutes later the news spread that, upon receiving proof of Kotze's perfidy by means of a report delivered to him while on the way to Berlin, the Kaiser had signed a warrant for his arrest in the *Fürstenzimmer* of *Potsdamer Bahnhof*, and had sent von Hahnke ahead to apprehend the culprit so as to avoid meeting him at the festivities. That these details were correct I learned in the course of the evening from Baroness von Reischach, *née* Princess Ratibor, wife of Empress Frederick's Court-marshal. Her Grace had it from her brother Franz, Major in the First Guard Dragoons and one of Kotze's most outspoken enemies.

Prince Franz, a middle-aged bachelor, had sprung into sudden prominence of late—he and his *ablatus*, Herr von Schrader, the Kaiser's master of ceremony. Baron Schrader, it was soon learned, had denounced his colleague to the investigating board, and finally had

disposition of his superiors, who call upon him when occasion demands. The important point of this is that an officer "z. D." is responsible to the military courts only, while the officer "a. D." is subject to ordinary civil jurisdiction.

brought formal charges against Kotze, submitting them to his Majesty on the morning of the cathedral celebration. General opinion at Court and in society was, of course, against the accused man. I say "of course," for distrust is a plant of rapid growth in an atmosphere where the praise of the lord's doings is one's best recommendation.

Her Majesty professed to be entirely unnerved by the shock; "she would never get over having associated so long with vile traitors;" she had had her "misgivings," though. The Kaiser, on his part, struck heroic attitudes. He had "saved society," "thanks to his initiative, the homes of the nation's nobles were once more secure;" and the members of the royal family and the aristocracy hailed the lord-protector! On Sunday and Monday, *nota bene!*

There was also some sentimental by-play—Madame von Kotze on her knees before William in the billiard-room of the Neues Palais, where her Majesty and the children were playing at hide-and-seek in the garden outside. Auguste Victoria had an excellent view of the proceedings; a beautiful but wretched woman imploring her powerful friend's mercy for her husband about to be sacrificed that another might go free! William proud and adamant, as if he had never leaned upon the beautiful arm raised to him in anguish!

"It is of no use, *gnädige Frau.* Justice must be administered. He shall be treated like any common criminal."

Then a shriek, a fall, and the children cried as if with one voice: "What is papa doing to Auntie Kotze?"

"You *have* no Aunt Kotze," said the imperial mother cruelly, and motioning to the servant, standing at a respectful distance, gave orders that madame's carriage be brought round into the *Sandhof*, the other side of the palace, from where the lady should depart. At the same moment, Adele von Haake emerged from the door-windows of the billiard-room, announcing that the *Ceremonienmeisterin* had rallied and begged to be received by her Majesty.

"Her Ladyship must apply in writing to my grand-mistress—tell her that!" And the Empress ran off, followed by the puzzled youngsters.

But while the unhappy wife and favourite drove home toward Berlin (she had not the courage to take the train for fear of being recognised), her avenger stalked into the palace-yard in the shape of a letter-carrier, bringing missives in the dreaded imitated print for both Kaiser and Kaiserin and many dignitaries. "*Anonymus redivivus*" paid his compliments to their Majesties and their Excellencies, and called them names for being so stupid as to incarcerate such an innocent, a man whom only petty spite or gross incompetency could connect with a crime that called for much ready wit and a dare-devil spirit excusable only "in the highest spheres, if not the all-highest."

"Take my word for it," concluded each epistle, "before three weeks have passed, 'Loloki' will be obliged to open Kotze's prison doors and beg him, by all that is sacred to the royalist, to hold his tongue."

If the anonymous correspondent, by the letters mailed twenty-four hours after the *Ceremonienmeister's* arrest, had hoped to benefit poor Kotze, this calculation went wide of the mark, the Kaiser ridiculing what he called "an attempt at impudent bamboozling."

"Pshaw," cried this doughty student of criminology, at dinner, "what a threadbare trick! The last of my '*Schutzmänner*' could have foretold that the guilty one would endeavour to mislead the prosecution by some such means, for, of course, he has an accomplice."

Quick as a dart, Auguste Victoria took up the thread. "That horrible woman! and she asked me for an audience only this morning."

"I did not say that I suspected Madame von Kotze," shouted the Emperor across the table; and I thought better of him for this flash of magnanimity, though his discourteous manner was painful to behold.

In the evening we were treated to an exposition of the "evidence." The late Herr von Schrader reviewed a dozen or more instances where the anonymous letters

had referred to affairs known only to Herr von Kotze and one other party, either one of their Majesties or some high functionary.

"If that be the case," whispered the Princess of Meiningen, with whom I was sitting, "why does not William arrest himself or my sweet sister-in-law?" and, addressing the Kaiser, she said: "If knowledge of a certain fact be an element of incrimination, why are not *all* who were in possession of it prosecuted? If Herr von So-and-so spoke to Leberecht about a matter which, some time afterward, was used by the *anonymous*, why must Kotze be the guilty one and not the other?"

"Because," answered William sarcastically, "your So-and-So left no traces of his felonious doings behind, while Herr von Kotze did." And his Majesty, assisted by an adjutant, produced two blotting-papers which, he said, were found on a desk in the *Adeliges Casino* immediately after Kotze had vacated the seat in front of it. "Look at these marks," cried William, in a voice pregnant with turgid solemnity; "the impression of the word 'Loloki' in imitated Latin print, the brand we all know to our sorrow. What does your Royal Highness say now?" he concluded, bowing to his sister.

"That the news is important, if true," answered Princess Charlotte flippantly, but she added, as if suddenly aware that she had gone too far: "I mean, if it can be proved that Kotze used the blotters."

"He was not only the last, but the only gentleman to sit at the desk on the morning the discovery was made; besides, more blotters, similarly inscribed, were found in Kotze's private office in the Schloss." His Majesty's face beamed with self-complacency while he made this statement. He acted, every inch, the famous barrister summing up an important case.

On the half-dozen pieces of blotting-paper and the hearsay evidence alluded to, the prosecution rested its case before the court-martial which presently assembled to try Kotze; but even this scanty bit of incriminating material was quickly reduced by one-half, the most important half too: the government's expert in handwriting

declared that the supposed impressions were made on the blotters with pen and ink, the letters being placed upside down, presumably in order to mislead. This would have been accepted as *prima-facie* evidence of a conspiracy to ruin the defendant by manufactured evidence in any court of law, but the court-martial thought otherwise. It decided to ignore the blotters, and found Kotze guilty on the hearsay evidence alone.

It all happened on July 5. No sooner had the royal quick-change artist heard of the probable disposition by the military court, than he decided that the Prussian eagle must soar above the biased judgment of those uniformed toadies. Hence the impromptu decree of release, the royal livery—a triumphal chariot in this case—and the order to his most exalted civil representative to fetch Kotze from gaol. The royal house had sinned against him—the Minister of the royal house must convey the sovereign's regrets.

That the Kaiser would not sanction the court-martial's findings, so evidently the outcome of parasitism, became known at the palace the same evening. He had dropped Lombroso and suddenly began to talk of the King's "most sacred prerogative," that of administering justice without need of professional jurists and judges. "Peter the Great left only one advocate at home when he came to visit my ancestor," he declaimed, "and this one he promised to hang upon his return after witnessing Frederick William's absolute methods. One cannot do this nowadays, but I mean to exercise the precious right of reversing unjust sentences whenever interference is thrust upon me." One of the Kaiser's adjutants characterised this speech "as a continuation of one delivered to her Majesty. The Kaiserin," he said, "came into the study this morning to offer some slight objection to the special honours designed for Kotze, but his Majesty cut her short by a rhapsody on the blind goddess. His present declaration is for the benefit of the Schrader-Hohenau-Ratibor coterie. The Kaiser will have no more of their accusations and inventions."

Indeed not; and notice was served to outsiders as

well. The *Reichsanzeiger* published a decree, forthwith ordering a new trial by another branch of the army, "the Third Corps." The disowned Guards had to declare Kotze's honour intact, while at the same time the Hanoverian Lancers, to which regiment Baron Schrader belonged, censured the latter for accusing a brother officer. Now followed a series of duels, in which Herr von Kotze alternately maimed his traducers and was maimed himself, culminating in the famous Schrader-Kotze combat that left his Majesty's informant on the field, a dead man.

During all that time, and up to this very day, the Kotzes did not come to Court, though formally invited as of old: Madame von Kotze could never get over that brutal scene in the billiard-room—"never, *jamais*, and if I live a hundred years." And William's little attentions—the sending of Easter eggs, of bottles of Steinberger Cabinet, of photographs, all duly advertised in the newspapers—worked no change in this attitude of proud unapproachableness. "She demands not only public avowal of her husband's innocence on your part, but that the real culprit's name be divulged, as that seems to be the only way of punishing him!"

Rejecting even the possibility of Countess Brockdorff's participation in the intrigue, suspicion points directly to Duke Günther as the *anonymous*. He was imperial Auguste Victoria's only *confident*, kept her posted about all the Kaiser's carryings-on, and on his part examined into the minutest details of the royal couple's lives in order to trim his sails according to the wind.

There are hundreds eating the Kaiser's bread, or visiting the palace, who, in their heart of hearts, hold my mistress equally guilty with her brother—the late Herr von Richthofen was one of them—but it gives me pleasure to report that, sifting and resifting the evidence, I failed to discover a single compromising circumstance substantiating that charge. Neither was Auguste Victoria an accessory before the fact, as is frequently hinted at in Court society, though her share in the

intrigue was both active and passive: her complaints of William's infidelities gave the first impetus to the persecution of Countess Fritz, Madame von Kotze, and others, and her tattling habits furnished, innocently enough perhaps, ammunition for most of the pestiferous bombs.

That the Kaiser can keep nothing to himself has been already stated, also that he is in the habit of speaking ill of women, and that his adjutants and friends keep him posted in all matters of gossip, the freshest in the market. William, then, supplied Auguste Victoria with all the scandals going, adding his personal observations and an outline of his intentions and decisions; the Kaiserin furnished the news to Günther, and Günther, not to be outdone, related to his sister the small talk about William and his favourites. The ducal store-house of both Majesties' secrets finally utilised them for his own purpose: to annoy his sister's rivals and to play tricks on his Majesty. And if there was a surplus, he disposed of it where it would do the most harm: among the intriguers so plentiful in the idle classes.

The first batch of anonymous letters was intended by his Highness as a sort of ante-carnival joke after a famous revel in Castle Grunewald, but, seeing he hit the bull's-eye, he fired another, a third, a fourth, ten, twenty, a hundred shots in quick succession, all the time persuading himself that he was working in the interest of his much-abused sister. Then imitators arose, first a few, later on a host of them, until, in the end, "one-half of Berlin society was writing scurrilous notes to the other." Ultimately the Duke had to take "leg-bail," and Countess Fritz and Madame von Kotze enjoyed a brief spell of freedom from what seemed to be a perennial annoyance, though there were plenty of good friends left to give them an occasional dig. When his Highness had run to the end of his Cook's ticket, the old game started anew, the letter alleging that Countess Hohenau had interrogated the Kaiser's children about happenings in the imperial bed-chamber having set the ball rolling.

I confess that it took me quite a long while to get to

the bottom of the intrigue; that some such solution would be forthcoming I had suspected from the beginning, and even if I had been royalty's most trusting toady, the evidence accumulating before my eyes on the one hand, and various hints of my friend, the Princess of Meiningen, on the other, would have disillusioned me.

But when proofs of Günther's implication were so abundant, could the Emperor possibly remain noncognisant of the facts? No, indeed! but as there were other guilty ones besides Günther, and as numbers meant safety in this case, William clutched most readily at the seam-rent evidence presented against the *Ceremonienmeister.* "What you say looks very probable," he told Baron Schrader, according to Princess Charlotte's story; "continue in your watchfulness and collect all additional proofs obtainable. As soon as anything in the line of direct evidence presents itself, we will seize the scoundrel."

Those bound upon poor Kotze's destruction then went to manufacture proofs in the shape of the "Loloki" blotters, and the Emperor, magnanimous being, gave Kotze back his uniform. "If Leberecht is the author of some of the anonymous letters," he calculated, "the star-chamber is the place to discuss his crime, and, if need be, that of his partner or partners. No matter whom he may incriminate before the court-martial, no one outside the officers acting as judges will be the wiser."

At his trial, loyal Leberecht did not breathe a word of what he knew against Günther, denying, moreover when directly questioned, that he had ever suspected the royal black sheep.

And now our modern Vicar of Bray turned "Papist —Jesuit!" Changed conditions called for a reiteration of the old faith: Kotze had been grievously wronged; his Majesty had never thought him guilty; his accusers had been misled or, worse still, misleading. Down with them, and shame on the biased judges!

But, at the same time, his Majesty would not let the

real culprit escape. Madame la Marquise de Villemonble, who claimed to be a great-granddaughter of some Duc d'Orleans and a Mademoiselle Florence, had been Duke Günther's amanuensis, putting the pepper and salt, the mustard and cress, into the letters. She was forthwith conducted to the frontier by two trusted members of the political police and warned never to show her face again in Berlin. This piquant little woman had been devoted to the Duke for two years, and had often helped to entertain his Majesty; but now all her protests went for naught. As to his Highness, he was given to understand that he would not be tolerated in Berlin or Potsdam for more than a week at a time. The Emperor would not allow him to open a new establishment in the capital or neighbourhood, and threatened to turn him adrift if he disobeyed.

The mystery as to who accused Günther in letters addressed to Countess Hohenau and the police has remained as unfathomable as that respecting the identity of the falsifiers of the "Loloki" blotters. The Hohenzollerns have always been mischief-makers, privately as well as politically, and that trick of the *anonymous* to affix the heads of persons to be lampooned to lay-figures in disgusting attitudes is but an old idea borrowed from the Sans Souci archives, which report that Frederick the Great ordered scenes painted from the lascivious volume *Thérèse Philosophe*,[1] the *dramatis personæ* to be likenesses of his friend d'Argens and the latter's wife, the former dancer Cochois. To both these persons the caricatures imputed the most loathsome, unnatural crimes. These pictures were smuggled into d'Argens's bedroom and hung upon the walls during the couple's absence. The same evening, when the unsuspecting philosopher and his innocent better-half were preparing to retire by the light of a wee taper, the King and his friends suddenly rushed in upon them, each armed with a candelabrum, thereby lighting up the room to perfection and disclosing its strange decorations, which

[1] The authorship of this vile book has been imputed alternately to the King and to Voltaire.

Frederick insisted had been in the place ever since d'Argens's wedding night, and, indeed, formed part and parcel of his conjugal outfit.

As to the Prussian police, anonymous letter-writing and letter-stealing have figured largely in its history. Under Frederick William IV., it was a toss-up whether the President of Police, von Hinckeldey, or the Prime Minister, Baron Manteuffel, was the most expert mail-bag rifler and slanderer by means of clandestine correspondence. These two worthies even went so far as to employ *mouchards* to steal letters from the King's desk and pockets. One of the documents so secured was a letter from Czar Nicholas, written in August, 1855, in which he said that he would be able to hold Sebastopol if the besiegers were not too hard on Fort Malakoff, the city's only weak point.

A Prussian policeman sold this invaluable information to one of Napoleon's agents within three days of the receipt of the letter, whereupon the French, on September 8, assailed Malakoff, stormed it, and put an end to the war of the Crimea.

This excursion into history, though seemingly far-fetched, must not be underestimated, for, now that the originator of the anonymous letter scandal and his accessories have either been silenced, neutralised, or dispersed, the historic facts related offer the only lucid explanation for the continuance of the nuisance. The poisonous rags ceased coming for a short span of time toward the end of 1894, but the Kaiser's intended holiday present to Uncle Chlodwig from the "Disposition Fund" roused the *anonymous* to renewed activity during the Christmas season of that year, and he has kept it up ever since. To mention a recent date, it was that same scribbling fiend who forced Ambassador Herbette to retire from Berlin in 1896 by reports of alleged intimate relations between William and Madame l'Ambassadrice.

CHAPTER XIII

THE EMPEROR'S RELATIONS WITH HIS MINISTERS—HIS EGOMANIA—PARALLEL BETWEEN WILLIAM II. AND LUDWIG II. OF BAVARIA

WILLIAM II.'S relations with his Ministers form a curious chapter in imperial psychology. The majority have quitted office after a row, like wronged menials in a badly managed household. Indeed, the Kaiser looks upon them as servants, and not only through his divine-right spectacles. From Chancellor to the last of the Secretaries, he treats them as *Handlanger*.[1]

Almost every day, when the Kaiser is at home, we hear this sort of dialogue at table:

Her Majesty to the Emperor: "You are going to Berlin" (or Potsdam) "to-morrow?"

His Majesty: "Exactly so." (*Ironically*) "You saw that in the calendar?"

The Empress: "Yes, but I thought Uncle Chlodwig" (or Herr Miquel) "was coming with his report."

Kaiser: "I ordered him to meet me at Wildpark" (or some Berlin station) "at 7 A.M., so that he may read his paper to me on the train."

And Prince Hohenlohe is seventy-eight years old, while none of his colleagues are below threescore. What limitless egotism, what contempt for the feelings of others, such an order involves! In December, 1895, the Kaiser invited the Chancellor to come to Potsdam at an unearthly hour to attend him on a trip to Spandau, where he proposed to exercise some regiments on snow-shoes. While breakfasting in his train, his Majesty would be pleased to listen to an epitome of the leading questions

1 "Unskilled help." In 1897 William designated Bismarck as having been his grandfather's *Handlanger*.

of the day delivered by his venerable relative, who is old enough to be his grandfather.

"*Madame la Princess* is awaiting your Majesty in the saloon-car," reported Count Pückler, at that time imperial travelling-marshal, at the entrance of the station.

"Princess Hohenlohe?" said the Kaiser, hastening his step. "Can my Chancellor be ill? That would be very awkward just now." He repeated the first part of the question when he shook her Grace's hand half a minute later.

"Ill? No, thank God, he is asleep," replied Princess Marie, who had just returned from one of her Russian bear-stalking expeditions. This resolute lady (since dead) was then sixty-six years of age.

"*Asleep* when his Emperor had commanded him to be by his side?"

"Tut, tut. *Monsieur le neveu!*" Her Grace no longer smiled. "You have not forgotten the conditions under which the Prince lent his services, I hope? The first of them is that his rank and age be respected. The telegram calling him—a man of seventy-five—to Potsdam at 7 A.M. in midwinter appeared so little in consonance with the agreement that I thought it bungled in transmission. His Majesty merely meant to ask Chlodwig to have the paper in Potsdam early in the morning, I surmised, and so I brought it to you. It is all right, is it not?"

What could the Kaiser do but put on a good face? "I am sure my gracious aunt always is," replied he, "though these proceedings are unusual, of course, and discipline you know——"

"You are joking, William. Such considerations held good with Herr von Caprivi. They are odious among equals. Now will you relieve me of this document?"

"I am a thousand times obliged, *ma tante*" (the Kaiser raised his voice for the benefit of his adjutants, who had remained at the door), "and" (speaking still louder) "I am sorry to hear that Uncle Chlodwig is not well. Moltke will attend you to the palace, and I hope to find you there at dinner. *Au revoir*—we have kept the train waiting long enough. Dona will be charmed to see you."

The Empress was indeed glad, especially when she learned that the meeting with "Willie" had passed off so well. I have the minutes of the conversation from her Majesty, on whom, by the way, the sarcasm of her Grace as well as the forced courtesy that characterised the Emperor's remarks were lost.

The Hohenlohes can do these things, of course, but a Miquel, a Schoenstedt, a Thielmann, a Hammerstein, and the rest, have to obey the most outrageous demands unless prepared to be bounced like drunken valets. In winter the gentlemen must be at his Majesty's disposal from 7 A.M. till 12 midnight: in summer he often invites them to report as early as half-past five or six o'clock. If the command appoints the time of the third cock's crow, the poor Excellency has to get up between four and five in the morning, as he must be in grand costume, gold-embroidered coat, hung with orders and decorations, silk stockings, pumps, knickerbockers and sword, for it takes a good hour to get to Wildpark station.

This is not a daily exercise, of course, for his Majesty likes his sleep as well as any other man; he keeps such early hours only after returning from long journeys, or when pleasure and military exercises make excessive demands upon his time; but even as an exceptional occurrence it is pretty hard on old gentlemen, used to regular hours and overburdened with business.

But if not wanted at 6 or 7 A.M., the Crown's foremost councillors are liable to be dragged from their work, their family circle, or their *siesta* at any other time of the day or evening; they can never call a single hour their own, seeing that William, who regards reports on matters of the highest political significance as mere *entremets*, to be hastily swallowed between courses of pleasure, or in the intervals of a tattoo, sends for his dignitaries wherever and whenever he finds himself at leisure or in need of some new excitement. The Chief of the Civil Cabinet, Herr von Lucanus, has told me that fully one-half of all ministerial reports are delivered on railway trains, or in the waiting-rooms of stations. "Part of the other half," he said, "is heard by his

Majesty in his carriage ; after others he goes himself, making impromptu calls now at the War office, again at the Chancellery, or at the Ministry of the Interior."

Herr von Hahnke has regular days for reporting, and as he is right-hand man in all military matters, the Kaiser himself regards the old General's lectures as *quasi* essential, but that notwithstanding, his Excellency has to fight for every thirty minutes of discourse with his Majesty, just as if he laid claim to time not previously spoken for. If the Kaiser is travelling and Hahnke is in attendance, the latter delivers his reports at any opportune hour ; while William is in his tub, before he gets up in the morning, or after he has retired. If for some reason or other Hahnke is not of the party, he must communicate with the adjutant *du jour* day by day as to the proper time to run up to Hubertusstock, Rominton, Kiel, or other places to perform his duty.

Those are trying days for Prussian and German Secretaries of State, when, as Leberecht Kotze remarked, "it is most appropriate to wear a grass-green cravat." The palace cronies say : "A minister who likes his job will keep an ear to the telephone, one eye upon the clock, and another upon the time-table," when his Majesty hunts in the immediate neighbourhood of the Neues Palais, for, if the weather turns out unexpectedly cold, or if his Majesty has the earache, as is frequently the case in winter, he will abandon the chase, and, nothing else being on hand, devote the time to work. Over the wires fly the words : "His Majesty commands Herr Miquel" (Herr *von* Miquel now), "Graf von Posadowsky," "the Minister of Agriculture," or "of Railways," to be at the Neues Palais at a given hour. Or a ring at the 'phone, and the momentous "*Ich befehle*" (the courteous phrase with which William opens every conversation over the wire) throws the state offices on Wilhelm Strasse and Unter den Linden into momentary confusion.

And when their Excellencies, often four or five of them, and the secretaries bearing the portfolios, arrive at Wildpark, the royal coachman frequently reports that

his Majesty has meanwhile changed his mind a second time and has taken to the field, expecting to return in two or four or maybe six or eight hours. So the busy gentlemen trot home again, sometimes to be recalled from Berlin shortly afterward. In the winter of 1896 this happened twice to Herr von Miquel, busiest of mortals. But, though mighty uncomfortable, it is not the most dreaded experience yet;—the worst infliction is an invitation to accompany his Majesty from the theatre, or some banquet, after ten or eleven o'clock at night, and deliver a lecture on the train while he softly snores approval.

On such occasions the Emperor usually wakes up as the train comes to a standstill, and, rubbing his eyes, says: "I am entirely satisfied with your proposition, go ahead and press the matter according to the suggestions made;" or, when rising in bad humour: "Leave your report with my adjutant. He shall go over it and submit its salient points anew. Decision will be rendered when I come back from ——. Good night."

Then he steps glibly into his carriage, and the Minister may retire to the waiting-room to sit down for two or three hours till the night express takes him home.

Occasionally, too, the Kaiser invites himself to supper at one of his Minister's, giving the victim half an hour's time to prepare for his reception, and informing him that he has "commanded" so and so many other gentlemen to be present. One of these invitations I especially remember. It took place on January 23, 1892, while we were all busy preparing for the reception of their Majesties of Würtemberg, set for the next day. On that evening, Countess Keller and myself attended our mistress in the great dressing-room at the Berlin Schloss, trying on a new gown for the projected banquet, and I was about to withdraw when the Kaiser came in to say that he would not be home for supper. "I have commanded Miquel," (Dr.) "Bender," (Baron) "Manteuffel," (von) "Helldorf, and" (Graf) "Douglas to meet me at" (Graf) "Zedlit's in about thirty minutes," he said. "I want to give them my views on the opposition

to the *Volksschulgesetz* and hear what they have to say. At the same time I will order Miquel to promise me to remain in office. His offer of resignation I have declined, at all events."

"Indeed," sighed the Empress. Her Majesty hated Miquel as the most formidable foe of the pious measure among office-holders.

When, fifteen minutes later, I drove down the Linden, I found that grand thoroughfare alive with people. The chasseurs and grooms, riding in all directions to drum together his Majesty's evening party from palaces, hotels, and apartment-houses, had alarmed the town in the neighbourhood of the Schloss, and as my coupé stopped at the Bristol,[1] the mob, recognising the royal livery, burst into cheers, which, however, gave way to "Ohs" and "Pshaws" when my nonentity, instead of the monarch's august person, hove into actual vision. In front of Count Zedlitz's palace stood at least a dozen policemen, and mounted *Schutzmänner* were riding up and down the left side of the avenue.

I stepped briskly into the hotel, and had no sooner reached my friend's room, when deafening sounds of "Hochs" and "Hurrahs" called both of us to the window.

There was his Majesty in a splendid victoria, a new grey overcoat thrown over his General's uniform, the shining helmet adding to his height. "See how he struts and bids for adulation. He reminds me——"

I caught my friend, once a *Hofdame* to Queen Marie of Bavaria, by the arm. "Pst! these hotel walls have ears."

Next day the Würtembergers arrived. Parades, processions, receptions, and in the evening a gala performance at the Opera House. During the principal intermission, tea was served to their Majesties and the ladies and gentlemen of the Court in the *salons* adjoining the royal box.

"These festivities, I trust, do not keep you from your work, William?" the King of Würtemberg was

[1] Next door to the Ministry of Worship.

heard to say, as he and the Kaiser retired into an alcove to puff a cigarette.

"Not at all. I settled beforehand the business liable to interfere with my enjoyment of your society."

"Not the *Volksschulgesetz?*"

"The very same. Last night I gave the extreme Christians to understand that I shall go with the majority."

"But Zedlitz? It means his ruin."

"Fiddlesticks!" laughed the Kaiser; "he perishes in his King's service. Can a Minister die a more beautiful death?"

When, after the performance, he had retired to his study to go over despatches a courier from Stuttgart had brought, his Suabian Majesty said to Captain Bieler, his adjutant: "Every conversation I have with the Kaiser heightens my conviction that he is drifting toward the natural outcome of the exaltation of the almighty ego—monomania of pride or grandeur. Here is this Zedlitz, on whom he and the Kaiserin have doted so much, and who drew up the new *Volksschulgesetz* after his Majesty's dictation. To-night my cousin informs me that he has thrown him overboard, disowned him and his bill, and when I expressed some slight compassion for the poor fellow, he said, in substance: '*Dulce et decorum est pro rege mori!*' Why, Ludwig never went further."

I am obliged, for the report of this conversation, to my friend at the Bristol, who happens to be a near relative of one of the gentlemen in the Würtembergers' suite. In the utterance nothing surprised me more than the allusion to the suicide of Lake Starnberg, and I said so. The Baroness took me up rather sharply. "I reported the King's words," was her piqued retort, "and if they coincide with my own views, so much more credit to woman's acumen. I have not acted *souffleuse* to *König* Wilhelm, I assure you."

I perceived the Baroness was angered by those doubts of mine, born out of a half-hearted attempt to disbelieve what came so near the truth.—To humour her,

I asked her about the hapless son of her late mistress. At first her Ladyship refused on the plea of "sparing my patriotic feelings," but consented after a while.

"I was never more struck by the likeness the Kaiser bears to the late Ludwig in manners and attitude," she said, "than when I saw him alight from his carriage a few evenings ago, and I was going to remark something of that sort when you stopped me: the same grandiose walk and gesture, the same studied pose of the head, face, and eyes, signifying deep thought, evidently with the intention of impressing the multitude; the resemblance is as extraordinary as it is painful to me."

"Permit me," I said, "there is no gainsaying that our Kaiser is theatrical, but to liken him to a maniac on that account is going too far."

"Pray do not misunderstand me, Countess," said the lady from Munich, "I do not judge the Emperor by exterior signs alone. I take the manifestations of his inner life, his relations to his mother, to his officials, and to his people, his government, his attitude toward and his contributions to art, literature, and what not, into consideration as well. And judging him from every conceivable standpoint, I say and repeat: William II. reminds me exceedingly of his late cousin Ludwig. To return to the spectacle witnessed from my window, with just such affectation of dignity was the King of Bavaria wont to walk in state processions, or on other public occasions, during the latter half of the seventies, not to speak of the last years of his life, when his dementia had become acute. Then the common horde shouted: 'Ah, every inch a King!' just as they do now in Berlin, but those capable of seeing below the surface, and professional men generally, shook their heads and talked of megalomania."

Under stress of these reminiscences I had to confess to myself that, as intimated in these volumes, the Kaiser's actions had often struck me as emanating from a mind not untainted by hereditary disease and not unaffected by egomania.

"My poor mistress!" sighed the former maid of

honour to Queen Marie, "what a blessing she did not live to see her grand-nephew on the road to destruction! Though she had become a thorough Bavarian, the glory of the Hohenzollerns was for ever in her pious mind. Indeed, the holy fervour with which her Majesty embraced religion during the last fifteen years of her life had its origin in the all-consuming fear that the rise of Prussia's Kings after the French War might have in it the germ of intellectual and moral disaster."

From a diary she kept at Hohenschwangau during the residence of the Queen-Mother there, the Baroness read to me this pathetic appeal, which, she said, was her late mistress's daily prayer:

"If it be true, O Lord, that I was the instrument to visit Thy wrath upon the house of Wittelsbach by transmitting the seed of insanity of my male ancestors, let Thy anger be appeased. In the person of Thy servant Frederick William IV., Thou hast taught the proud Hohenzollerns how transitory is earthly power; the sorry fate of my own sons will for ever keep before the royal house of Bavaria the awful punishment excessive pride suffers at Thy hands. May the pious lives of Frederick William's successor and my son's administrator atone for past sins, and may the Wittelsbachs and Hohenzollerns of the future be wise, humble, and God-fearing men."

"Her Majesty then concurred in the opinion of the medical authorities: that her sons inherited the insanity of the Hohenzollerns through her?"

"Indeed she did, poor lady! and this knowledge led her to mortify her flesh and penetrate her soul with ceaseless sorrow," replied the Baroness; "but why do you ask? I thought that was a matter quite generally understood."

"Because," I replied, "the Kaiser has a habit of ignoring that fact, and, instead, offers an extract from a letter the Duchess of Orleans wrote to Queen Charlotte in 1710, and which reads:

"'Grave suspicions are entertained regarding the children of the Bavarian house: the Elector and his brothers are thought to be the progeny of a crazy Italian doctor, named Simoni. Though it is claimed the doctor went no further than to give the Elector and his wife a strong cordial, promising therewith to increase their family, all the children born after the experiments began are suspiciously like the medical person.'

"'The madness of this traitorous Latin,' argues William, 'has been bobbing up in the Wittelsbachs

time and again, and King Otto is the latest victim of the curse.'

"I know of course, in a general way, that before the advent of Frederick William the Fourth's niece, the Wittelsbachs were a sound-minded race," I said, in conclusion, "but was there really no hereditary taint on the father's side? You who lived for a life-time at the Munich Court are in my eyes a better authority on this question than historians."

"I have known Ludwig the Second's grandfather and father," answered my friend, "and in my younger days met people who remembered Max Joseph quite well. All were eminently sane men, and of Maximilian's seven brothers and sisters, only one, Princess Alexandra, exhibited signs of derangement at a critical period of her life, when religious exaltation got the better of her for a time. King Maximilian had half a dozen illegitimate children remarkable for intelligence—several of them are alive to-day—but those borne him by his Prussian wife—Ludwig and Otto—went stark, staring mad."

Queen Marie was the daughter of Prince William of Prussia, son of Frederick William II. and uncle of mad Frederick William IV. Her mother was a Princess of Homburg and a blood relative of Marie's paternal grandfather. The Queen was born October 15, 1825, and died May 17, 1889, having passed many years in acute melancholy.

This latter fact, as well as the Prussian-Bavarian kinship itself, has been carefully covered up for tens of years. Only once, in 1885, I remember reading in the *Vossische Zeitung* some slight allusion to these data, but as the chief of the political police threatened immediate prosecution for *lèse-majesté* if the offence were repeated, the subject was dropped. And that happened under the first Emperor, when the present Kaiser was seemingly far removed from the throne.

Had the old Emperor a presentiment of coming events? Did he, with the wisdom of age, perceive the analogy between his grand-nephew and grandson?

There is every probability that he did, for the

medical authorities had already decided that Ludwig might have escaped the curse of insanity for many years to come, had power not been thrust upon him so early in life.

If Kaiser Frederick had lived for twenty or thirty years longer, the catastrophe now threatening William II. might have been averted, for persons with their minds hereditarily tainted may, nevertheless, shape their destinies to some extent. By refusing to feed their inordinate appetite for self-aggrandisement, by rigidly declining to give way to the egotistical impulses consuming them, they may retard the progress of the disease, may even lead it into harmless channels. Perhaps William would have learned to curb his inherent proclivities, if his judgment had been allowed to mature. As it was, both grand-nephews of Frederick William IV. decided upon the opposite course.

Suddenly elevated by his father's untimely death,[1] Ludwig gave himself up to the most extravagant enjoyment of kingly puissance, taking the mediæval notions of the "*roy Soleil*" for a standard and acting in a general way as if his petty kingdom were an empire of the vastness of Charlemagne's realm. And the ink of the pamphleteering literature called forth by his tragic end was not yet dry when William plunged into the same abyss, strutting, head tossed in the air, blustering.

And has he not kept it up ever since with true madman's perseverance, braving the ridicule of the world, throwing sound counsel to the winds, and critics, ever so humble, into goal?

The manner of the Kaiser's intercourse with his Ministers has already been noticed. "Unprecedented," said the average reader, no doubt. Pardon: there is an example of such conduct. Ludwig II. treated his Excellencies no less brutally. Like William II., he made it a point to live away from the capital the greater part of the year, thereby increasing his councillors' labours, and, like his cousin, he compelled them to chase after

[1] Maximilian died in his fifty-first, Kaiser Frederick III. in his fifty-seventh year.

him now to Nymphenburg or to the Bergschloss, to Herrenchiemsee and Linderhof, again to his Renaissance, his Rococo, or Chinese palaces. They were "commanded" to follow him to the highest peaks of the Alps and to the lakes, into the mystic depths of his forests, or to his "blue grotto"—always in great gala, delivering reports in the open with bared heads, the dictum: "I am the master, you the menial," being continuously kept before their eyes. And is not William's habit of interrupting Hohenlohe's or Miquel's lectures on government affairs by a "Look at yonder antlers—I shot that deer then and there," branching off into a rambling account of some everyday hunting experience, but a repetition, in another form, of Ludwig's practice to break the monotony of Minister von Lutz's reports by declaiming a hundred verses or so from one of Schiller's dramas? And the Kaiser's hankering for absolutism, his assumption of omnipotence when as head of the Empire he is really the most restricted of monarchs—no sovereign at all in the extreme sense of the word—bears not this impotent bragging an ominous resemblance to Ludwig's hallucination of being a mighty potentate, autocrat of a hundred millions of slaves?

Professor Quidde, of Munich, sold in June, 1894, one hundred and fifty thousand copies of his pamphlet, "Caligula: a Study of the Insanity of Cesarean Power," which suggested a parallel between the conduct of Tiberius's successor and the German Emperor of to-day. Many of the examples given in the *brochure* were striking; with true native profundity, Herr Quidde even unearthed instances in Roman history that might pass as counterparts of the dismissal of Bismarck and of the squandering of the old Emperor's fortune by William II.; but, though Caligula is dead these eighteen hundred years and despite the fact that the majority of Quidde's analogies were rather far-fetched, the Germans proved so intent upon the promised explanation of their Kaiser's eccentricities that they allowed the publishers to pick up a fortune in an incredibly short space of time—seventy-five thousand marks for Roman history (brought up-to-date)

within four weeks! Mommsen's and Treischke's books do not yield half so much in a decade. All told, half a million copies of the pamphlet were purchased; in other words, every intelligent citizen of the Fatherland either bought or borrowed it, and all read it! Is it possible to conceive a more telling proof of the nation's distrust of William's sanity? And if the great mass of the people is moved to suspect that his much-fawned-upon *Genialität* is a disease of the nerves, how much more so are we members of the Court holding daily intercourse with his Majesty, we who are intimately acquainted with his own and his family history and gorged with the gossip of all royal establishments of Europe, past and present?

The reading public sees from time to time paragraphs in the papers setting forth the Kaiser's aspirations to emulate Frederick the Great. Though anachronistic, there is nothing discreditable in such an ambition; yet members of the household, who, like myself, see William grimacing for half-hours at a time before a mirror hanging by the side of a life-size portrait of Frederick, cannot help feeling deeply apprehensive that behind all this there is more than vainglorioussness.

At the breakfast given in honour of Prince Augustus of Saxony, in October, 1895, the Kaiser surprised his guest by an invitation to accompany him to Potsdam, where he would show him a portrait of Frederick that resembled him, the speaker, in every line. His Royal Highness is a polite man, and, after beholding Pesne's historic canvas, representing the King in his thirtieth year (about 1743), with round cheeks, luxurious brown hair done up in a queue, and his breast encased in a silver cuirass, he told the Emperor many complimentary things, but from his manner it was evident that he was as little impressed with the alleged likeness as the rest of the company. And small wonder: there is no resemblance whatever between "the last of the Kings who finished off for ever the trade of King" and the most pretentious of his *epigoni*. As to his Majesty's particular claim, that he has "the eyes of the victor of Rossbach,"

one need but quote Mirabeau in refutation. In his *Histoire secrète de la cour de Berlin*, the shrewd French observer says: "Those orbs" (of Frederick) "fascinated one with seduction, or with terror, at the bidding of his great soul." That there exists a resemblance between William's boyish features and those of Frederick in another painting by Pesne, "*Friedrich und Wilhelmina*,"[1] as the Kaiser pretends, is equally absurd.

As a matter of fact, the monarch of the end of the eighteen century and his successor of the end of the nineteenth have as little in common, outwardly and inwardly, as the second Ludwig of Bavaria and the fourteenth Louis of France had, and that William, ocular disproof notwithstanding, insists upon imagining himself Frederick's counterpart, is but a phase of his monomania of grandeur equivalent to a hallucination of which his late cousin was possessed.

In like manner William's Frederick-worship began by easy stages. That, as a boy, passionately fond of the army, he should admire a relative who was one of the greatest generals the world produced, is only natural. That, grown to man's estate, he led every public effort to honour Thomas Carlyle, the architect of his ancestor's fame in the English-speaking world, is commendable, But lo! he clambers on to the high horse himself which yesterday no one could ride but the man who, single-handed, whipped the whole of united Europe! The admirer has grown into an imitator, the copyist will be a rival soon.

"I am a composer like Frederick." "Like the great King, I never wear anything but uniform." "My hatred of England is only equalled by the contempt Frederick the Great bore to the nation of thieves and traffickers," etc.

The attempts to establish a facial resemblance to Frederick, as well as the oft-claimed intellectual one, have been going on for three years, and of late, spurious pictures supporting this theory are coming to light with

[1] The original hangs in the castle of Charlottenburg. It represents Frederick at the age of four, beating a drum, and walking at the side of his sister, afterward the Margravine of Baireuth, attended by a Moor.

alarming frequency; almost every one of the small Court balls are costume-festivals nowadays at which the Emperor appears in the military dress of Frederick's period, generally as the late King's aide-de-camp; Frederick's marches are played in the Schloss and palace on all occasions, appropriate or not, and as a wind-up the Kaiser usually turns *Kapellmeister* to demonstrate to the professional leader "the spirit in which the composition was conceived," and "how Frederick the Great would have it executed if he were here." And last, but not least, his Majesty has revived and enforces with unwonted energy in such matters the Cabinet order of 1888, commanding visitors at Court to appear in the "Rococo costume[1] Frederick loved so well," while at the same time the uniforms of the palace guards are gradually changed to resemble those *en règle* in the latter half of the past century. Now and again William informs his titled household that he has been "graciously pleased to grant" this or that regiment or battalion (it is always one with which he comes into much personal contact) "grenadier caps *à la* Frederick," "kettle-drums *à la* Frederick," or "bugles *à la* Frederick."

"Frederick held that only the nobility is capable of personal honour"—this is William's excuse for calling "*vons*" and Barons and *Grafen* "the flower of the nation."

When, in the beginning of October, 1897, Prince Hohenlohe, by threat of resignation, prevented the Kaiser from offering armed assistance to the Queen of Spain (to counteract the possible intervention in Cuban affairs by the United States), his Majesty talked for three days incessantly of "Frederick, who was his own chancellor and parliament—of the living, puissant Hohenzollern-initiative, always setting the dogs of war loose before his enemies had time to get over their surprise.

"But Frederick is not dead, he lives here" (striking his breast), "and his mailed fist will clutch somebody's throat sooner or later," and so on *ad infinitum*.

[1] When first issued, this order called forth so much protest and ridicule that the Kaiser, *par force*, allowed it to become a dead letter for the next eight years.

Perhaps it will. But when it does, a *paranoia*[1] verdict, such as that which discrowned your Majesty's grand-uncle, in October, 1857, and your cousin, in June, 1886, will assuredly stalk in the wake of that act.

The present chronicler has neither the technical knowledge nor the material at hand to attempt a complete parallel of the cases of Frederick William, Ludwig, and William. That a marked similarity existed between the mental conditions of Queen Louise's son and the Bavarian grandson of William of Prussia is notorious, and that many of Ludwig's idiosyncrasies survive in William II. was already shown; but I should be the first person to credit these signs of derangement to the account of mere eccentricity if they were exceptional manifestations instead of links in a chain that seems to drag the Kaiser irresistibly to his doom.

Alas! that there is such a chain, and twice alas that it should be the one that drew Ludwig below the weeds of the mountain lake!

The King of Bavaria's case was diagnosed as exaltation of self-esteem and of craving for grandeur, coupled with limitless egotism and heightened by impulsiveness. He was found to be deficient in judgment, a spendthrift, curious for knowledge and hard-hearted withal; that is, he possessed singularities so prominent in the Kaiser that their summary strikes one, *nolens volens*, as an estimate of William's character.

Examples of the Kaiser's megalomania are numerous throughout the pages of this volume, and the present chapter has furnished some interesting analogies between certain acts of volition on the part of both royal cousins, but nothing short of a methodical comparison of their lives and deeds as kings and men will explain the Kaiser's case. This I will endeavour to give on the basis of my own observations regarding William's sayings, his actions and vagaries, placed in juxtaposition with an account of Ludwig's character and his life and death furnished by the Munich *Hofdame*.

[1] Paranoia, confusion of the senses, was the medical term used, to characterise the condition of both Frederick William IV. and Ludwig II.

To begin with the symptoms of monomania of grandeur: Ludwig's borrowed *l'état c'est moi* theories were no more absurd than are William's attempts at out-Muscoviting autocracy and playing the Jack-of-all-trades.

I remember his Majesty coming down to "second breakfast" one afternoon—it was either the 27th or 28th of October, 1894—while the question of who would accept the Chancellorship after Caprivi's dismissal was still pending and the whole country was torn up by doubts and misgivings. "There is a pretty state of things," he cried, and all of us expected to hear it announced that Uncle Chlodwig had finally refused—"here is a pretty kettle of fish! This city of——" (naming some small Rhenish town) "petitioning to build sewers and proposing to empty, according to plans submitted, the refuse into the river just above the chief bathing establishment. Of course, nobody in the Home Office saw the terrible mistake, and it took me four hours to correct the drawings and suggest a better plan."

Bothering about the sewage of a secondary town while the Empire is quaking in the throes of a crisis is a phenomenon of rapid thought, or else an anomaly born of the passion to play Providence.

The former Minister of Worship, Count Zedlitz, was selected by William for his important office, despite the fact that he had never enjoyed the benefits of a course in college, and the most extensive sphere of administration his new Postmaster-General, Herr von Podbielski, a retired cavalry officer, ever presided over was a stable full of hussar horses, for which he bought forage and whose manure he sold at advantageous prices; yet the Kaiser thought the one a fit superior of a Virchow, a Mommsen, and Helmholtz, and the other splendidly qualified to succeed the great Doctor Stephan. The why and wherefore he explained a dozen times before all the Court: "because they will receive their instructions from me." Still, Richard Wagner was drummed out of Munich because Ludwig desired to make him his Minister of Finance.

The Kaiser appears to have inherited the late Ludwig's splendid memory. The Munich Dame of the

Court tells how long and successfully her late master deceived the unlearned by feats and well calculated tricks of memory, which many accepted as a heaven-born gift instead of as *stigmata*, of evidence of the morbid organisation of his brain, and the history of most persons insane from and with Cesarean power records similar phenomena. Tiberius, Caligula, Mohammed Toghlak, and Ivan the Terrible—all were afflicted with this same pseudo talent. All of them were ready talkers, knew whole regiments of soldiers by name, and could reel off fifteen hundred or two thousand words of technical slang on any given subject. Indeed, Ludwig's and William's grand-uncle, Frederick William IV., was the rhetorical wonder of his time—for a German.

"What can our brother admire in that wretched Sultan?" asked the Crown Princess Sophie of her sister of Lippe at the family meeting in Friedrichshof in June, 1894.

Victoria, who might have been a vassal of Abdul Hamid if Bismarck had not interfered and if her first betrothed, the late Alexander of Battenberg, had lived—Victoria, not a very bright person, passed the query on to her husband. "He must know, the Kaiser tells him everything."

"William says he likes the Grand Seigneur as the embodiment of absolutism, as a ruler prepared to rule at the hazard of seeing one-half of his people dead on the ground, that the other half may learn to obey," spoke Adolph, impressively; "that he has told me a dozen times. 'If Frederick William IV. had possessed but a spark of the spirit that lives in the so-called sick man,' he once said, 'I should be monarch in the true sense of the word to-day, though Berlin gutters might have run with blood for weeks in succession during March, '48.'"

The Duchess of Sparta covered her face with both hands. "Horrible!" she sighed.

"But his Majesty's true convictions," whispered Baroness Reischach—"think of the Frankfurt speech."[1]

"Nonsense," resumed the Prince of Hesse, in an

[1] The Kaiser said on August 16, 1888, at Frankfurt-on-the-Oder, "he would rather see his forty-two millions of Prussians dead on the battlefield than give up one foot of ground gained by the Franco-German War."

effort to efface what his all too-truthful brother-in-law had said, "our *beau-frère* Willie merely flatters the Padishah to obtain his Sultanship's permission to visit the imperial harem the next time he goes to Constantinople."

I am rather inclined to think that the Kaiser's desire to smoke a *tschibuk* with Abdul Hamid and a thousand Circassians, with white and black and olive and red women, kadyns and odalisks, is as strong as ever, and that his Turkish policy is in part dictated by this passion; but that Prince Adolph correctly reported his Majesty's sentiments with respect to ideal kingship was demonstrated three years after the family reunion in Empress Frederick's castle, namely, in the summer of 1896, when the Kaiser presented Abdul Hamid with a chromo for living up to his conception of "rule by the grace of God."

His hands red with the blood of forty thousand murdered Christians, the successor of the Prophet received, in June of that year, a coloured photograph representing the imperial family in a loving group—Kaiser and Kaiserin and all the children. "My master," our Ambassador, Freiherr von Saurma, was ordered to say in his presentation speech, "hopes that this simple souvenir may be acceptable to your Majesty as a token of his affection and eternal friendship," massacres or no massacres.

Twice Baron Saurma telegraphed Prince Hohenlohe for further advices on this piece of diplomatic business; his first telegram seemed to indicate that he looked upon the picture as a belated Easter gift, or something of the sort. On being reassured of its up-to-dateness, he wired he would rather resign than carry out so degrading an act after what had just happened in Constantinople; but Hohenlohe, afraid of the terrible scandal sure to ensue, persuaded Saurma to withdraw his threat, and so the presentation took place with due ceremony to both Majesties' profoundest satisfaction.

"Women do not understand these things," was the Emperor's gruff rejoinder when her Majesty objected to having her likeness and that of the children sent to the "wholesale murderer of Christians." "What do women

know about being consequential? These Armenians were rebels, and my friend, the Sultan, treated them as I would treat a mob opposing my authority, any day."

"But," pleaded her Majesty, "Herr von Marschall tells me it was primarily a religious riot, the Mussulmans falling on the Giaours and killing them off like so many sheep."

The Kaiser shrugged his shoulders and smiled. "I am shepherd of the Lutheran Christians in Prussia," he said brutally; "those in foreign lands must take care of themselves."

And a year and a half later he sent Prince Heinrich on "the new crusade, to uphold the Cross and punish the slayers of Christians in China. But, then, his Majesty never dined with the Tientze, the Son of Heaven, and that worthy's Viceroy, Li Hung Chang, when he visited Germany in August, 1896, utterly failed to fulfil William's expectations.

While insanity of power usually instils an overweening passion for the military in its victims, Ludwig differed from his cousin, the Kaiser, in the point of bellicose proclivities. During the last ten years of his life, he scarcely ever donned uniform, but, though trotting and marching and countermarching to the tune of drum and fife had no allurements for the disciple of Richard Wagner, he utilised the army as eagerly as William for purposes designed to heighten the lustre of his personal appearances.

My friend tells me that the drive-ways and footpaths of the Munich royal park, *Englischer Garten*, were fairly alive with soldiers, gendarmes, police, and detectives when the King was at home. The public was given to understand that the less seen of it the better, and ladies and gentlemen of the Court, known to the officials, had to submit to petty annoyances in the way of identification, warnings, and so forth, at such times as well as the common rabble. Ludwig never rode or drove out except like the Shah—cavalry in the front, at both sides, and in the rear.

"Perhaps," I suggested, "your poor King suffered from monomania of suspicion, or exaltation of awe."

This the *Hofdame* denied. "Only during the last

twelve months of his life that phase of insanity appeared to trouble him." The Baroness told me of several visits she paid the King in his lonely mountain castles on behalf of her mistress. "Sometimes," she said, "I secured permission to gaze upon the all-highest face for a second or two, that I might be the better able to make a minute report to her Majesty. On other occasions I saw Ludwig, unknown to him, as he drove past in his gilded carriage over lonely roads regularly patrolled by pickets of good-looking horsemen attired in the most fetching uniforms. It was evident the mad monarch could not do without the royal pomp of *soldateska*. Even after his misanthropy had degenerated into positive hatred of mankind—such hatred that he was unable to look a person in the face—he would not miss his regiments, to him the representatives of kingly puissance."

Heretofore Ludwig's soldier-worship has been explained solely on immoral grounds, with divers references to Nicomedes-Cæsar; the above interpretation, which research has proved correct, brings it nearer home by identifying it as one of the features of insanity of power. In Czar Paul, one of William's relatives on the side of his father's mother,[1] this element of monomania of grandeur overtopped the rest of his crazes, but even then the son of Soltikof and Catherine did not go further in his military tyranny than William does. Paul is reported to have passed most of his time on the drill-ground; so does the Kaiser. His biographers tell us that "his mind was incessantly occupied with petty regulations about costumes and appearances"; that he was "continually inventing new dresses and accoutrements for his soldiers." You should hear William preach on the importance of such warlike measures as the length or shortness of a sabre-strap, the pointed or broad form of heels attached to the dancing-pumps of young lieutenants commanded to Court balls, or listen to his tirades against setting the buttons of an undress frock in a straight line—themes we people of the Court hear

[1] The mad Paul of Russia was the grandfather of Empress Augusta, consort of William I. Many of Czar Paul's freaks are revived by William II.

discussed morning, noon, and night. Moreover, count, if you can, William's regulations and orders about the cut of pantaloons, the facings of pelisses, and the impression tan boots are sure to make on African savages, and you will think better of that pseudo-Romanoff strangled "because his lucid intervals became shorter week after week." Over the taxpayer's feelings, who pays for the Kaiser's pettifoggery, his endless innovations and alleged improvements, that improve only the bank accounts of army purveyors and are often dropped as suddenly as they are introduced—over the sentiments of this beast of burden, steeped in penury, indifference, and political hysteria, I will draw the veil.

Paul, we are assured, was crazy enough to enforce his clothes regulations even upon civilians, A.D. 1796. And a hundred years later, the Kaiser ordered that all station-masters in Prussia must provide themselves with a specially designed dress-suit, including a toy sword and a plumed hat, to wear when he passes through their town. As the outfit costs from three to four hundred marks, and the majority of the officials receive but three or four times as much per annum, resignation or starvation, or both, became the order of the day.

That his Majesty tells the ladies of his household what they shall wear on festive occasions is tyrannical, but not wholly unreasonable, seeing that he imagines he owns his *entourage* body and soul, but other women, even relatives of his Majesty, will not take kindly to his expensive suggestions. Seldom does a ball or state occasion pass that there is not a gap in the line of our royal dames; now the Hereditary Princess of Hohenzollern sends "her regrets," again Princess Aribert goes to bed twenty-four hours previous to a costume festival at Court. Even the Hereditary Grand Duchess of Baden declines time and again to help ruin her husband by reckless extravagance of toilets, such as the Kaiser demands his guests to engage in. As a matter of fact, William's passion for having everything his own way is entirely incompatible with reason. There is no art outside of the narrow circle approved by him, no stage and

no state craft, unless conducted on rules laid down by him to actors, to parliamentarians, to diplomats. His soldiers, his children, the women of his household and of society, his officials and men friends, all must be dressed, or must masquerade, according to his varying moods.

On returning from a review, the war-lord seldom speaks of the success or non-success of the exercises; that he caught Lieutenant von X. Y. wearing an overcoat an inch shorter than the regulations stipulate, or a sub-officer attired in pantaloons of his own, instead of those furnished by the regiment, is of far greater importance in the Kaiser's eyes. For these eyes reflect the mere outer film of things correctly enough, but do not penetrate below the surface because the mind directing them works too rapidly to weigh the relative importance of things.

At the close of the manœuvre season of 1897, Count Haeseler, the General upon whom Moltke's mantle is supposed to have descended, said to a Reichstag deputy: "Those mimic battles arranged by his Majesty were magnificent, each ending like that between the fabulous lions, whose tails alone remained on the field; but as to the burial of the dead (supposing the Kaiser's theories were followed out), I cannot, for the life of me, conceive who would attend to it. Let us assume, for argument's sake, that the nations of the *Dreibund* march into the field under the chief war-lord's guidance—Germans and Austrians side by side, Italians covering the rear. Then let two or three battles be fought, such as we experienced in Bavaria this summer: vast masses of foot launched on top of each other, *tambour battant*, horse and artillery swallowing hailstorms of bullets with gusto, as if they were *Erbswurst* soup! Why, unless our Peninsular friends turned grave-diggers one and all, pestilence would drive them back. It is my humble opinion," concluded Count Haeseler, with a sarcastic smile, "that the dead never entered into his Majesty's calculations."

In his book, "The Blot Upon the Brain," William W. Ireland, M.D., Edinburgh, says: "They" (the victims of insanity of power) "are easily beaten in the field by generals who prefer what is essential to what is superfluous."

CHAPTER XIV

THE PARALLEL BETWEEN WILLIAM II. AND LUDWIG II.—(*continued*)

THAT both royal cousins were possessed of this passion for mummery (uniforms, liveries, masquerades, in and out of season)—King Ludwig sometimes carried it so far as to dress his servants as Indian Rajahs, and sit down to supper in the open while the thermometer was near the freezing-point—this analogous turn of mind in Frederick William the Fourth's grand-nephews may perhaps pass for accidental, be the relation of this craze to insanity of power ever so well founded—more convincing are similarities in the lives of Ludwig and William that show a concurrence of opinion in the line of the higher emotions.

"During the night of October 15, 1885, half-an-hour after midnight," says my Munich friend, with a reference to her diary, "I was called up from bed by the night-watch rapping at my door. With my senses benumbed by sleep, I understood only these words: 'Majesty wants you.'

"'Is her Majesty ill?' I cried, much alarmed, while pulling on my slippers. By that time my maid had arrived. 'The King has come from Linderhof and wants to see the Queen,' she said. 'He had the candles lit in the reception-room by his own servants, and is impatiently walking the floor wondering why her Majesty keeps him waiting.'

"Lieschen told me this while we were running to the Queen's bedroom. In ten minutes our mistress was dressed. In five minutes more I heard the noise of

wheels in the court-yard below: the King was driving away.

"I hastened downstairs to accompany her Majesty back to her apartment. She looked awe-struck, but did not speak a word. Only when I had put her to bed again, and was about to take my leave, she said: 'Marguerite, I do not want you to retire with feelings of misgiving. The King brought no alarming news. He talked of nothing but the weather, and at the moment of departing added: "To-day, I believe, is your sixtieth birthday. Accept my royal felicitations."'"

To compel a sickly old woman to get up in the middle of the night for the pleasure of haranguing her with platitudes—who but a madman could conceive so preposterous an idea! "Yet look at the date," resumed the Baroness: "October 15, 1885! Only eight months before Ludwig's tortuous career came to a horrible end."

The speaker recalled numerous instances of the King's cruelty to his mother: how he forced her to vacate the palace she liked best; how, by ostentatious display, he caused Queen Marie to doubly feel the loss of power and influence; how, by his parade of hatred and contempt for her relatives, he wounded her sentiments and lessened her popularity in the land—three examples out of a hundred, that remind one strangely of the Kaiser's treatment of the Empress Frederick.

That William dispossessed his mother from the home where she had spent the happiest years of her life,[1] that he gruffly denied her the poor pleasure of assuming representative social duties during Auguste Victoria's frequent pregnancies ("If my wife is ill, I will be Kaiser and Kaiserin both," were his words), that he is the leader of Anglophobia in Germany and the abettor of hundreds of printed insults to the Empress Frederick, are facts as notorious as they are pitiful.

[1] Immediately after Emperor Frederick III. died, William assumed possession of Castle Friedrichskron, where his parents had lived for over thirty years, and to efface every sign of his father's residence there he dropped the name and reinstated that designated by the builder, Frederick II.: namely, Neues Palais.

I have heard these and similar events discussed; I have seen them wept over in the royal family. "It is his confounded bad heart," voted Prince Albrecht. "Ay, this sort of thing is dictated by meanness, common everyday cussedness," decided the Hereditary Prince of Meiningen.

An anonymous letter, purporting to echo the opinion of a renowned foreign authority on affections of the sentiments, diagnosed the case as the result of power-drunkenness, and went on to state that, as Mohammed Toghlak, the megalomaniacal Sultan of India, was pleased to kill his brother and exalt his mother, so it was William's good pleasure to give a lift to Prince Heinrich (occasionally) and abuse his parent.

While unwilling to adopt this extreme view, I must confess that the Emperor's habit of signing his letters and telegrams to his mother and to his wife and children, "Wilhelm, *Imperator, Rex*," smacks decidedly of insane exaltation of self-esteem.

With chronicling stories of his Majesty's excessive pride, a diarist of Samuel Pepys' industry could be kept busy ever and anon; to-day the General Order issued by the *Kommandant* of Potsdam announces, at the top of its columns, that his Majesty is "graciously pleased to sometimes drive a dog-cart" (follows elaborate description of vehicle, horse, and livery, which latter is different from the ordinary one), "he handling the ribbons himself and the Empress sitting *dos-à-dos* with the groom." "Officers and men," continues the paper, "are cautioned to take notice of the above fact and to be careful to execute the prescribed evolutions when meeting the imperial party, under penalty," and so forth. To-morrow the Kaiser narrates at supper how he whisked Count Gessler off Bornstädter Feld and ordered him to keep to his room for three days, "because his spurs were not of the approved pattern."

"*Graf* Gessler?" queried the Kaiserin—"Gessler of the Cuirassiers and of my Body-guard?"

"The same. And why did I do it? I might not have been so hard on him, had he not passed me the

other day without saluting when I was in my dog-cart."

"Surely, he did not recognise our new livery."

"He ought to recognise his Emperor through a three-inch board! And, by the way," added his Majesty, "I learned the name of that captain of Dragoons who failed to *make front* before us near Babelsberg Sunday morning; it was Freiherr von ——, garrisoned at ——, and commanded to Berlin to serve on the General Staff. I found that out by sending a description of the delinquent to the colonels of all our dragoon regiments. He is on his way home. Berlin is no place for a donkey of his calibre."

In the winter of 1895, Lieutenant-Colonel von Natzmer came near losing his head as commander of the Third Guard Lancers on account of the stupidity of a trooper who, being sent on *galopin* duty in the course of some exercises, mistook the Emperor for a captain of infantry named Kahn, William wearing no shoulder-knots or other insignia on that occasion. Only by offering to distribute photographs of his Majesty in a variety of uniforms among his men did Natzmer save his bacon. The case of under-officer Mohr, of the First Foot Guards, and how he became a sergeant, is also interesting. Mohr was never suspected of "carrying a field-marshal's staff in his knapsack," but nature fitted him with eyes capable of much contraction and dilation of pupils, so that, like a member of the genus *Felis*, he can see in the dark. That stood him in good stead when he ran across his Majesty near the Berlin Stadt Schloss one wintry evening. Recognising the war-lord at a distance of several paces, he promptly *made front*, sounding an all-submissive "Good-evening, your Majesty."

William was elated. There was true loyalty. This fellow, if he had half a chance, would live up to the maxim that a soldier will recognise the Kaiser through three inches of oak. "Who are you, my son?"

"Under-officer Mohr of the First Guards, at your Imperial and Royal Majesty's command."

"Only an under-officer? But you have a sweetheart, I suppose?"

"At your Imperial and Royal Majesty's command,—yes, the daughter of *Feldwebel* ——"

"Then go to your room, sew on the stripes, and report to your future father-in-law and to the young woman as his Majesty's sergeant. Right about face, forward, march!"

Mohr (marching "as if he were going to throw away his legs," as the phrase goes): "Thanks, a thousand humble thanks! God save your Imperial and Royal Majesty."

Another and more dangerous form of the Kaiser's excessive vanity and egomania shows in the current prosecutions for *lèse-majesté*. For this offence sentences amounting to some three hundred years of imprisonment are imposed by Prussian judges from January to December, and as the courts of the allied German states and statelets follow the lead, it is calculated that, on this score alone, as many years of imprisonment are annually meted out in the Fatherland as there are days in the year. Accordingly, three thousand five hundred years—twice the time of the Christian era, lacking a few paltry centuries—were wiped out of the lives of some eight to nine thousand of his subjects since William assumed the crown, the list of culprits embracing both sexes and all classes of society. And for what?

In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred (I quote from public records) for the heinous crime of impeaching the Kaiser's aptitude as a composer, as a ruler, poet, diplomat, or ship-builder; as a conqueror, orchestra-leader, or expounder of the Monroe doctrine; as a sportsman, as God's anointed, as a painter, strategist, novel-writer, circus-director, or lawgiver; as advocate of duellos, as a constitutional king, stage-manager, or absolute monarch; as playwright, huntsman, infantryman, cavalryman, familyman, or maid-of-all-work. The prosecutor's license is practically limitless; but there are still some knots in his rope that admit of lengthening the line. To let

no guilty one escape, it is stipulated, for instance, that insult to Majesty superannuates only after five years. Thus a discharged servant, a faithless friend, or malicious employer may prosecute you in January, 1898, for a remark you dropped (or did not drop) in December, 1893, or, if he prefers, he may blackmail you for that length of time, under threat of informing the state's attorney. And that frequently happens in the Fatherland.

As to the personalities of the culprits, I will quote from one of the daily bulletins:

"The wife of a feudal land-owner in Pomerania was 'sent up' for nine months because she remarked that the Emperor might kiss her foot.

"Eugen Richter's sally, made in the Reichstag some time ago: 'Yesterday the German Emperor and fifty of the noblest of the nation ran for two hours after an old sow,' a Breslau editor clipped for his paper and inserted under the head of 'Court News,' adding date and place. The joke cost him his liberty for nine months.

"In September, 1897, a popular music-teacher, Fräulein Hadwig Jaede, in Stettin, was sentenced to three months' imprisonment for having, in 1893, denounced the 'Song to Ægir' as a piece of rubbish."

The poor girl addressed a petition for pardon to my mistress; but, being afraid to face her husband on this score, the Empress asked Herr von Levetzow, the former President of the Reichstag, to present the matter.

This is her report of that gentleman's interview with the Kaiser:

"Herr von Levetzow had no sooner broached the case, than the Emperor interrupted him. 'You think the laws against *lèse-majesté* are too rigidly enforced,' he cried. 'Why, you astonish me! That there are so many prosecutions, only proves that the sentences imposed are much too light. If they were not, those outcasts that dare to point the finger of scorn at God's anointed would be afraid to open their mouths. Believe me, as soon as I can find a *man*, a *real man*, to take charge of my Chancellor's office, I will have him prepare a bill increasing the punishment for traitors of this sort.'

"Of course," concluded her Majesty, "after that, poor Herr von Levetzow had not the heart to press the petition for pardon."

"Increasing the punishment for *lèse-majesté?* and at this early date!" exclaimed Deputy Richter, when the non-success of the venture was reported to him by one of his intimates at Court,—"and Ludwig II. proposed a similar course of action only during the last two years of his lunacy! When he sentenced some lackeys to be knouted to death who had laughed on seeing him gallop around his library, snorting and neighing like a horse; when he ordered that his Minister of Finance should lose both eyes for refusing to advance him twenty millions to finish his fairy castle of Neuschwanstein; or when he decided that an adjutant, who had failed to render him a particular service, was to famish in the 'black hole' below the foundations of Linderhof, the King was undoubtedly mad, and only a madman could have expected to see such commands executed in 1885 or 1886! During the earlier stages of his illness, even acute monomania of pride and vanity could not induce him to ask severer punishment for victims of the existing laws."

Meanwhile, the increased punishments have come to pass without resort to legislation. Acting upon his Majesty's suggestion, the courts are of late condemning men and women for criticisms of governmental acts *in which the Kaiser takes a special interest*, for protesting against the Sedan celebration on the score of peace propaganda, for instance, and the lists of offenders comprise, besides members of the aristocracy and prostitutes, little boys and girls who, on account of tender age, are otherwise exempt from criminal prosecution.

"It is William's sense of divine appointment that makes him look so sharply after criminals of this sort," is my mistress's stereotyped apology when members of the family bring up the matter. Poor lady! she is not always happy in the selection of her similes. The above one, for instance, she used once too often; namely, on the occasion of a gathering of relatives at the Neues Palais, in October, 1897, when the Court was laughing over an act of imperial clemency in the case of a sixteen-year-old nurse-girl from Coblentz, who had been

condemned to nine months' imprisonment for saying she would like to sleep with the Emperor.

William, by the merest accident, learned of this, and at once pardoned the precocious youngster.

"She has probably seen me during the manœuvres in Rhineland," he argued, curling his moustache, "and devil take me if I blame the wench. Ill-bred as she is, that was *her* manner of expressing admiration."

Contrast with this the decision of a Breslau judge, viz.: that a certain Wilhelm Schultze, because he had wished himself in the Hereditary Prince of Meiningen's place (place stipulated), and had said so openly and shamelessly, was not punishable for libel under the law. Argued the judge: "Schultze is an ignorant fellow, and, having great admiration for Princess Charlotte, expressed that feeling after the manner of his ilk. *Ergo*, I discharge him, with a warning."

These are exceptions, and not particularly edifying ones, from a cruel rule that recalls the mad vagaries of the crazy Rudolph II.,[1] and does more to undermine royalist sentiment than even the Kaiser's speeches. A friend of mine in the Ministry of Justice has kept a record of the sentences imposed for criticisms of the "Song to Ægir." He counted three hundred and eleven years, seven months, and fines amounting to nine thousand marks, during 1893, 1894, 1895, and 1896. Can you blame his Majesty's adjutants for listening with straight faces to his side-splitting remarks: "Now you will hear my magnificent composition," when, at a banquet in Mohacs, Hungary (September, 1897), the programme announced the song to the sea-god, who in reality was a miserable landlubber. "The Austrians and Hungarians laughed to kill themselves," reported one of the participants, "but we knew better. If any of our crew had dared to smile assent, he would have been given occasion for kicking himself sooner or later."

[1] Rudolph II., Emperor of Germany,—his grandmother was the crazy Juana of Spain,—reigned from 1576 to 1612. He was insane on the subject of his imperial dignity, as well as on other subjects, and countless innocent people lost their lives, their liberty, and their fortunes for alleged lack of respect for this crowned madman.

In connection with *lèse-majesté*, it should not go unnoticed, however, that there are one hundred and forty-eight English square miles in Germany where man, woman, and child may say of the Kaiser what they please, this sanctuary being known as Reuss, short for Elder Branch, while the *Almanach des Gotha* designates it as Reuss-Greitz-Schleiz-Lobenstein-Eberswalde, with several villages yet to be mentioned. The potentate of this district is Heinrich XXII., a cousin of the Heinrich who, during his wedding-night, was overheard to apostrophise his wife *à la main gauche*, the circus-rider Loisset: "Oh, Chlotilde my only!" whereupon the former queen of the arena responded with delicious pathos: "Oh, Heinrich my twentieth!"

(As old Kaiser Wilhelm allowed this story to be published throughout Prussia, the Reuss tyrant at once determined that hereafter no form or manner of blackguardism directed against the Hohenzollerns should be liable to prosecution in his territory, and to this resolve his Grace has nobly stuck all these years since 1879.)

Newspapers seized for insult to Majesty in all the rest of the twenty-five states and Free Cities, constituting the common Fatherland, are freely circulated in Reuss, *ligne aînée;* its 53,787 inhabitants, and visiting strangers too, may shout all they like about William's idiosyncrasies, and *Serenissimi'* dog-tax records abound in such invectives as "Wilhelm" and "Preuss."

A feature of William's character that recalls some of the darkest days of his late cousin's declining years is the hatred he bears to his servants. Those one thousand ill-paid menials in showy liveries, hanging about the royal residences, are but a "contemptible thieving horde" in his eyes—"rascals whom to know by name would be to honour them." When talking to his people—needless to say it is always to give a command or ask a question—the Kaiser invariably addresses man or woman: "You there!" and none of them ever heard that cheap courtesy: "Good-morning" or "Good-evening" from the master's lips.

My Munich friend tells atrocious stories of the

"Chinese ceremonial" *en vogue* at Linderhof and Herrenchiemsee from 1880 to 1886—how the King's servants had to scratch at the woodwork to announce their presence at the door——

"Why that?" I interrupted.

"Because the King could tolerate a lackey only if acting the dog that his Majesty thought him to be!" The Baroness continued: "His valets had to approach him crouching on their stomachs—no one wearing the royal livery dared look the King in the face, and, finally, Ludwig even thought the tone of his voice too good for his people. So he conceived the plan of writing his orders on slips of paper and, spitting on them, pushed them under the door for those outside to pick up."

Of course, nothing like it has yet been introduced at the Neues Palais and Schloss, but Ludwig, too, worked himself up to the frenzy of servant-beating by easy stages. During the initial phases of his malady, he would order a servant who had displeased him to be removed to some lonely manor-house or lodge, there to continue for the rest of his days at an inferior salary and without ever having an opportunity to gaze upon the royal presence again. The same happened to the Kaiser's old body-chasseur Rau, among other royal employees—Rau, who caught his Majesty's coat-tail in the carriage-door—and to Rau's successor, who, on a particularly warm winter day, asked whether his Majesty required a lap-robe, instead of placing it in the coach without troubling the master, and to *Haushofmeister* (Major-domo) von Jurns, because the royal yacht *Alexandra* could not be got ready so quickly as the Kaiser demanded.

Like all victims of morbid impulsiveness, a symptom going hand in hand with megalomania, the Kaiser thinks himself above the restrictions of space and time. If he wants a thing, he imagines he has but to say so in order to procure it, whether it be a shirt-stud dropped under the table, or a historical painting for which a dozen square yards of canvas have just been nailed up.

And this condition of the imperial mind tends to

more people's ruin than all the rest of His Majesty's crazy notions, save, perhaps, the one compelling persons to make themselves invisible on demand.

The palace regulations stipulate that no servant shall be found in the Emperor's apartments during his Majesty's presence in the castle, sleeping hours excepted. Now it happens sometimes that his Majesty rises at the fifth hour, instead of the seventh or eighth, as announced. What are servants, suddenly confronted by the news of the master's approach while engaged in cleaning, to do? To drop work means dismissal, and to be seen by his Majesty carries the same penalty with it; so they run, simply run, trusting to good luck that the evidence of disorder in the rooms may not be noticed.

My maid, who was formerly attached to the royal chambers, says it is a curious spectacle to see the wood-carriers, firemen, scrubbers, dusters, window-cleaners, and polishers tumble over each other in a wild scramble to elude the master's eye. There must be no noise, no spilling of water, and certain corridors and staircases are to be avoided at all hazards. Suzette herself hid once for three-quarters of an hour in an empty stove,[1] the only place of safety within reach when the Kaiser came upon her as she was about to enter his room. And this sort of hiding-place has since become popular in the palace, though it is apt to ruin clothes and house dresses, especially the latter, of white and blue calico, with white aprons and white cuffs and collars.

"But why did you not crawl out as soon as his Majesty had passed?" I asked.

"Because the Kaiser remained in the room to which the stove belonged and the slightest bit of noise would certainly have brought him round to my prison gate. And then—*Kopf ab*" (off goes my head), "as *gnädige Frau* knows."

I may be allowed to interpolate here that Prussia rejoices in a peculiar law permitting master and mistress

[1] In the Neues Palais the stoves are lighted from the corridors, and have immense openings.

to correct their domestics by an occasional sound thrashing. The statute is an old one, and the Diet has striven to abolish it ever since it, the legislative body itself, struggled into existence. But all attempts met with most vigorous opposition by the government. When the proud privilege of kicking a flunky, or boxing a maid's ears, is up for discussion, the bench of the Ministry is always occupied to the last man, whilst royalist orators give ready support to the official claim that the ancient law is one of the pillars of social order, and that its abolition means nothing short of anarchy.

Why the state should go out of its way to uphold this cruel and barbarous statute is not easily conceivable to outsiders. Surely, the times are past when it was thought consistent with the dignity of the King of Prussia to have salt-laden pistols at his elbow in order "to hurry up" sluggish pages. Frederick William I. followed that custom, and in one and the same year lamed one man for life and blew another's eyes out. That happened one hundred and fifty or more years ago. Ancient history, is it not? But history repeats itself. The great Frederick and his puny successor, when punishing servants, never went further than to disfigure their faces by blows with walking-sticks, or the butt end of a sword, yet Karl of Prussia, grand-uncle of the present Kaiser, revived Frederick William's practices and occasionally killed a menial or two—a fact which led one of his brothers to remark that, if not a Prince, Karl would surely die by the halter. All of which shows that the Hohenzollerns are dangerous masters; that cruelty runs in the family, so to speak;—as a matter of fact, terror stalks ahead of William, his people flee, and hide in fireplaces and niches to escape his eye: they do not care to expose themselves to violence; and what guarantee is there against a caning, or worse, when the sight of a servant walking up a staircase or through a corridor suffices to throw the master into a violent passion?

"*Die verdammten Hausdiener*" (those accursed

flunkies) "lounge everywhere about the palace; Eulenburg, you must keep them in the kitchen, or cellar, where they belong," is his Majesty's everyday complaint to his grandmaster, when at home.

"May it please your Majesty, no man or woman enters the residential parts of the palace unless on special duty."

"Details, my dear Eulenburg, do not concern me, and I will not have them thrown up to me. I tell you, and repeat, that the sight of the lackey is distasteful to me, and it is your business to rid my environment of eye-sores."

There was "Mother Anna," the wood-carrier. One morning, in the winter of 1889, having deposited her bundle of fire-sticks in the Kaiser's antechamber, she caught a glimpse of his Majesty through the half-open door. He was sitting at his desk, reading a newspaper. "Lord," thought "Mother Anna," "there is God's anointed in his dressing-gown! Who would have thought that my poor old eyes would ever be blessed by such a vision. And," she said to her mates later on, "I stood as still as a mouse, just like a miserable little mouse, and peeped and peeped with frightened yet grateful eyes."

And while the old women were still gossiping, one of the secretaries from the Court-marshal's office came up to inquire which of them had been on duty in the imperial apartments that morning.

"I," said "Mother Anna" falteringly.

"Well, then pack your traps and get your wages. His Majesty will not allow such as you to spy into his affairs."

Empress Frederick took care of "Mother Anna," giving her work on Bornstädt farm, otherwise she might have famished, for she was seventy when turned away from the Neues Palais.

But there are rows with the servants even for lesser cause—about a cigar-stump, for instance.

It was, I believe, in February, 1896, when his Majesty warned the Empress and the members of the *entourage*

against "the pilfering lot of hirelings that infest the palace."

"Nothing is safe," he cried, adding, with a show of severity: "I ought to turn my rooms into a fortress, as did the lord of the Hradschin" (imperial palace in Prague).

In the afternoon her Majesty sent Herr von der Knesebeck to ascertain when, and of what, the Kaiser had been robbed. Hear his report: "On Sunday night, after the smoker, his Majesty put the stump of an *echte*" (real) "Havana cigar into an ash-tray in his small toilet-room; to-day" (Wednesday), "when he desired to finish it, it was gone, and all inquiries among the attendants, *Kammerdiener*, wardrobemen, lackeys, and chasseurs, proved unsatisfactory. His Majesty therefore concluded that one of the footmen stole the stump, and an investigation is under way."

It lasted three days. Then the *corpus delicti* was found—ruined beyond hope of retrieval—at the bottom of a refuse-barrel. After seeing it on the dresser for two mornings in succession, one of the chambermaids had thrown it away.

"The *Stummel* looked so shrunk up," said the reckless hussy, "I thought his Majesty did not want it any more, and, fearing a reprimand for allowing dust-catching things to lie around, I put it into my pail and cleaned the ash-tray."

The Kaiser likes popular applause, huzzahs, and *hochs*, but the hurrahers must keep at a distance. Unlike his royal grand-uncle and his cousin of Bavaria, he is not a misanthropist, not yet, but his contempt for everybody beyond the pale of his own set—"*das verdammte Publikum*" he calls them—increases more and more, particularly as to women.

Each successive year her Majesty and Count Eulenburg experience greater difficulty in persuading the Kaiser to permit the customary royal procession at the Opera House ball, held during carnival, and even if he consents to "mix" with the "*damned public*" on that one occasion, he usually backs out at the last moment.

In 1895 and 1896, William chose to emphasise this contemptuous treatment of his Berliners by persistently keeping to the rear of the royal box, so that very few of the thousands ready to smile upon him got a chance to do so. Does not this remind one of mad Ludwig's saying: "The people do not *deserve* to see the King"?

Quite frequently the Kaiser's unapproachableness has led to most disgraceful scenes. So it happened on Whit-Monday, 1894, that the Kaiser refused to attend the celebration of the Lehr und Wehr battalion, opposite the Neues Palais, unless *das verfluchte Publikum* was pushed farther back, whereupon imperial adjutants, Court and House marshals, and generals galore scrambled off in all directions to have the order attended to. At the bidding of the then *Kommandant* of Potsdam, Herr Von Bülow, mounted *Schutzmänner* and soldiers on guard used their steeds and muskets freely, and next day our grand-master received over a hundred complaints from ladies of the aristocracy, reporting that they had their feet trampled on by grenadiers and their hats and faces brushed by horses' tails—eventualities not on the programme so far as their invitations indicated.

"These hysterics," as he called the protests, afforded William much amusement and pleased him the more, as they seemed to back up his oft-expressed opinion that women are apt to become nuisances on public occasions.

"I will have none of them by-and-by," he said, and forthwith gave orders that the number of permits admitting members of the weaker sex to the parade-grounds should be gradually lessened. To the spring parade of 1896, held in the Lustgarten adjoining the Potsdam Stadt Schloss, only one hundred officers' wives and daughters were invited, these to have their seats on the terrace.

The review was set for eleven o'clock, but most of the favoured ladies arrived two hours earlier, whereupon they were told by a police lieutenant, standing at the Schloss gate, that his Majesty had given orders to keep

the terrace clear until the very moment he appeared on the grounds. Royal servants then took charge of the women and conducted them into a vault-like subway, at the farther end of which was a small door leading to the terrace over dirty steps.

In this dark, damp, and ill-smelling cellar the ladies were locked up until two minutes to eleven, when they were set free to select places for themselves. I was standing behind her Majesty and little Princess Louise at one of the lower windows of the Palace, in full view of the extraordinary spectacle that now ensued. Their Excellencies and Ladyships came panting up the steps, pushing and jostling, pawing and clawing each other, to gain precedence or room. Here a dowager countess raised her skirts above the knees to climb over a row of chairs, there the young wife of a commanding general tiptoed along the stone rampart, her train over one arm and exposing an incredible expanse of hosiery. *Freifrau* von L——'s lace petticoat was torn into tatters in her efforts to win an advantageous place—there was no such reckless display of limbs and linen since Borel unbalanced his ladies for "*La Bascule.*" The First Guards, standing opposite, shouted with laughter. Her Majesty was furious. Turning to her brother, she said: "After this you will agree with me, I hope, that the Kaiser's dislike for woman's attendance at military spectacles is well founded. I blush for our soldiers, compelled to witness such a sight." Poor lads! they deserved pity, for the Emperor, enraged at the "*damned public's*" behaviour, continued the drill half-an-hour longer than usual.

But the Kaiser's *animose* notions find expression also in measures of political significance. So he changed the district of Rominton, where he has a hunting-box, into an Eveless Eden by buying out all the farmers who were either married or employed female help, and the once populous village of Theerbude is nowadays half deserted in consequence. Still, a few petticoats remain there, and his Majesty had a new carriage-road built, enabling him to reach his residence "without running the gauntlet of gaping wenches."

There are many pages in my Munich friend's diary reporting similar measures instituted, or proposed to be instituted, by the late King Ludwig; but the analogy between the cousins is most striking in the infatuation for the stage, common to both, and in the revelations of their superlative egotism—the passion to satisfy their appetites, which was Ludwig's, and is William's, only aim in life. The theatrical bee in their bonnets seems to be the same that buzzed in the head of the late Frederick William IV., when mysticism had not the upper hand in that quarter; but, whether inherited or not, it is one of the stock fixtures of insanity of power. It cost the Romans under Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, and Elagabalus thousands of millions. Ivan the Terrible was an actor of no inconsiderable power, and even those poor imbeciles, Charles II. and Don Carlos, offsprings of megalomaniacs rather than power-drunk themselves, were much devoted to the spectacle, though probably preferring a "horse with its bowels gored out, or a Jew writhing in the fire," to high tragedy.

At first, Ludwig was a patron of the drama of the most legitimate order: the classics of German literature appealed mightily to his sense of the ideal, and their foremost interpreters became his companions. One of them was the tragedian Rohde, the other the Wagner singer Nachbaur. They were granted the unheard-of privilege to *tutoyer* the King, but there was nothing in Ludwig's relations to these men that shunned the light of day. The King's *faible* for the theatrical approached the abnormal only when his enthusiasm for Richard Wagner degenerated into a cult and when his admiration for the romantic Kainz addressed itself to the person, instead of the artist. As Ludwig's brain became more clouded—that is, as his insane big-headedness increased and his perverted tastes pushed to the front more brazenly—the former patron of "Egmont," the "Maid of Orleans," and "Marion De Lorme" threw classics to the dogs. He would have only such plays on the royal boards as depicted his own dreams of greatness, that showed him (or the historic types he thought he

impersonated) as the embodiment of earthly power, in the rôle of conqueror, lawgiver, or wrathful divinity, as arbiter of the world and in similar parts. And to obtain the dramatic products wanted, he hired men to join together comedies and tragedies from anecdotes, court scenes, and incidents which he himself furnished ready rabbeted and pared down, as are the walls and roofs and chimneys and window-casings of those Norwegian wooden houses, sent parcelwise all over Europe.

The Kaiser's taste in matters theatrical has moved along similar lines of idealism, followed by self-glorification. To begin with: Goethe, Schiller, Hebbel, Grillparzer, then Wildenbruch, Lauff, Büttner.

During the first four or five years of his reign, his Majesty tried to trundle the Thespian chariot alongside his political and diplomatic tally-ho coaches. His Intendant of the Royal Play and Opera Houses, Bolko Count Hochberg, the same who once came near being brother-in-law to Herbert Bismarck, was a good enough Major of the Reserves, but as to competing with Oscar Blumenthal, Ludwig Barnay, and the late Pollini—that was entirely out of the question. "I will let him run the financial end, and look after the artistic department myself," said his Majesty, shortly after the Court left off mourning for his father and grandfather. And he was as good as his word. He read plays, or had them read to him, attended rehearsals, and helped some of his—Prince Wilhelm's—ex-favourites to parts to which they were by no means entitled. The programmes were his, the insults offered to modern playwrights were of his making, as was the annual deficit.

In 1890, Ernst von Wildenbruch, known as the author of a tiresome but ultra-patriotic play, "*Die Quitzows*," sprung into sudden prominence at Court. The Kaiser had a last found a laureate "capable of interpreting Brandenburg-Prussian history in dramatic form"; through him he would "talk to his people, recalling the Hohenzollerns' past greatness and foreshadowing deeds of future grandeur."

Wildenbruch became a regular visitor to the Kaiser's

study. They planned and declaimed together; the author wrote tirades by the yard after the Kaiser's dictation, and William corrected and improved the manuscript. So "The New Master" was born, a drama glorifying the Great Elector and incidentally suggesting that the Emperor was a man of the same stamp.

It was the first step on the inclined plane. Brandenburg history—written by Brandenburgers—now became the watchword. For, of course, "Wildenbruch is one of us,"[1] else how would he come by his genius?

"At the head of the Wagnerian movement there walked, as is fit, an insane King" (Nordau)—William and Ernst arm in arm, lead the *avant garde* of German imperial letters.

In the annals of our Court, the winter of 1896–1897 lives as the dreadful period of the Emperor's pregnancy with "*Willehalm*,"—"*Willehalm*" being a festival play, conceived and written by the literary *Zweibund* in commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of the birth of William I. (March 22). There was not a member of the upper household who did not know large portions of it by heart long before its production, so incessantly were the words drummed into our ears. "*Mein Herr Grossvater*," "*Wilhelm der Grosse*," were the sole topics of conversation by Kaiser and Kaiserin, and his Majesty persisted in giving whole pages of monologue and bits of the dialogue at all times, either to point out passages written by himself, or to illustrate the beauty of Wildenbruch's versification improved by him.

The last ten days preceding the festival William divided between attending rehearsals and instructing the chief performers privately at Court Hochberg's Berlin residence. In consequence, my mistress saw little of her husband save at bed-time, when, she told Countess Brockdorff, he was still full of the grand drama and the trouble he had had with the actors and actresses to make them understand their parts.

[1] Wildenbruch is a grandson of Prince Louis of Prussia and of Henrietta Fromm. The name has previously been borne by the natural offspring of Prussian Princes.

There was Fräulein Lindner, for instance, cast to play the "Soul." She had actually smiled at a certain passage of her monologue. "That made the Kaiser wild," declared her Majesty. "'Fräulein Lindner,' he cried, 'by an expression like that, you are liable to spoil my whole play. The German soul, I want you to understand, is grave, stern, tragic almost. Try to picture it as it is written on my own face. Then you cannot help being successful. And as to your costume, it must resemble a train of thought—it must be an uninterrupted, flowing line. There must be neither girdle nor corsets.'"

"She will look like the soul of a miller's wife, turned into a big bag of flour," said Princess Feodore of Meiningen, who has inherited some of her mother's wit and all her Royal Highness's inclination for mockery.

"*Willehalm*" was performed, and seven hundred and fifty of the Kaiser's one thousand invited guests fled before the drama was half over. This festival play, dedicated to the simplest of kings, proved nothing short of Byzantinism run wild. As Louis XI., "least majestic in all his actions, his manners and his exterior, a most ordinary man, dressing like the meanest of the people, who gave audiences seated on a broken-down chair with a dirty cur upon his knees"—as Louis was the first ruler—not a Roman Emperor—to whom the title of "Majesty" was accorded, so had Bismarck's and Moltke's old master divine honours thrust upon him, though certainly the last to have claimed, deserved, or accepted them.

"Tiresome and grotesque," said the critics; "*meschugge*" (slightly touched) was the dictum of *vox populi*, that did not know how near it came to be *vox Dei*. But his Majesty's friends, who had followed the genesis of this play, shook their heads sadly, and many had resort to the trite phrase: "I told you so." In the Kaiser's deliberate aim to place William I. on unsurpassable heights of greatness, they recognised the craving for self-glorification that threw Prussia into political chaos in the fifties and bankrupted the Wittelsbachs twenty-five years later.

"His *Herr Grossvater* be blowed—it's the present anointed who clamours for recognition as a demi-god," wrote a certain Russian diplomat to St. Petersburg, and I doubt if the situation could have been more tersely expressed. The anonymous correspondents, too, who had become notably reticent since Madame Herbette's departure, revived their notorious practices, quoting whole pages from Quidde's "Caligula" in support of the theory that Cesarean madness sat upon the throne of Frederick the Great. Here are some of their deadly parallels:

"Caligula used to call his senators up from bed that they might see him dance. 'Loloki' keeps us all night at the Opera House to hear him declaim about his grandfather's impossible virtues and about the superlative statesmanship of Bismarck's employer, charging us a fat entrance fee in addition."

"Caligula was so crazy on the subject of the theatre that occasionally he took part in the performances himself. 'Loloki' has not yet appeared on any stage, save informally in the concert-room, as band-master, but he turns good actors into spiritless automatons by his drill and interference, and he writes plays, which is worse."

"Caligula owned a thousand different showy dresses, and changed his garments half-a-dozen times a day. 'Loloki' prides himself upon his arsenals full of different uniforms, and wears out a dozen valets per day dressing and undressing him."

"Caligula was inordinately fond of variety performers, especially indecent ones. Whether he ever commanded army officers and Princes to appear before him in parts such as 'Loloki' ordered the Hereditary Prince of Sachsen-Coburg-Gotha and officers of the Guard Fusileers to assume at the smoking concert in the Fusileers' mess during the winter of 1896 is doubtful. Suetonius" (the biographer of the first twelve Cæsars) "gives no news on that point, but then there were probably no Sisters Barrison in the first half of the first century, so that Caligula missed the trick of seeing a royal Prince disrobe and ride a horse woman-fashion."

"The Roman Emperor appointed old soldiers to the most important civil offices. Was Podbielski ever anything besides 'an old soldier' before 'Loloki' made him Postmaster-General?"

"Caligula gave all officials of his Court military rank. 'Loloki' has turned all his goldsticks into martinets."

"Caligula forced parents to witness the execution of their children. 'Loloki,' in oft repeated speeches, prepares his soldiers for the feast of shooting down or running through their parents, brothers, and sisters."

A witty criticism of the Kaiser's ability as a playwright was passed by the Hereditary Princess of Hohenzollern in a letter to a friend:

"J'ai vu *Der Neue Herr*
Hélas!
Et après *Willehalm*
Hola!"

In September, *Willehalm* was followed by another festival play, which the Kaiser wrote in conjunction with Captain von Lauff. Produced at Wiesbaden, in honour of the visit of their Italian Majesties, the drama elicited but pathological interest, where it called not for guffaws or pious, deferential wonderment. And according to some members of the Court society permitted to see William's third (or fourth) yet unpublished play, "*Deutscher Michel*," that is another changeling out of wind and bombast, sired by egotism, only more loose-jointed, more rambling, more audacious in the treatment of the omnipresent *Ego*.

CHAPTER XV

EXAMPLES OF WILLIAM II.'S EGOTISM—THE EMPEROR AND LORD LONSDALE—THE QUESTION OF *LÈSE-MAJESTÉ* AND MEGALOMANIA—THE EMPEROR'S LOVE OF BEAUTIFUL HANDS

GEORGE III. found a louse on his plate at dinner and ordered his whole household shorn, men and women alike; that was brutal, and tyrannical, and every tyrant has in him the making of a complete egoist. In the case alluded to, the egoist turned madman every few years. Yet, when King George first uttered the maxim: "Having no wish save the prosperity of my dominions, I must look upon all who would not heartily assist me as bad men as well as bad subjects," no one had the temerity to say that his excessive love of self was proof of a deranged mind. Frederick William IV. thought exactly like George III., but had not stamina enough to act accordingly. His grand-nephew (Ludwig) was his *alter ego* in that respect, and his surviving grand-nephew (William), improving on the British ancestor, adopted Caligula's mottoes: "There is but one master, one king," and "Let them hate me, if they but fear me."

The last phrase he used frequently in his public speeches during the first half-dozen years of his reign; after the appearance of Quidde's pamphlet, he dropped both, to avoid odious comparisons, and went back to George's petulant screech: "I wish you well; therefore, if you do not agree with me, as scoundrels and traitors I will flog you into obedience."

Long years of acquaintance with the Kaiser have convinced me that he is morally irresponsible for many

of his countless acts of assumption, injustice, incivility, and brow-beating. He cannot help them. Taking interest in no one but his ego, and viewing society (so far as it does not directly contribute to his momentary comfort) as something not to be reckoned with, he seems to be unconscious of the existence of any one besides himself.

When he goes riding with his wife, and some accident to her mount or harness delays her Majesty on the road, William proceeds to his destination in the most unconcerned fashion, taking his gentlemen, gendarmes, and grooms with him; neither does he lessen his pace to give her Majesty a chance to catch up with the party. "Dona" has her own gentlemen and ladies. Let them look after her.

Maybe the Kaiser admires a woman he meets in society, or the wife of a newly appointed official. He will say so without reserve, extravagantly praising her good points, if she has delicate hands or fine bosoms. That the Empress, upon whose good graces a woman's position at Court largely depends, will turn against the favoured one, strike her name from the visitors' list, and give her the cold shoulder, if ever afterward they meet, does not concern him in the least. He seems to think that honour grows again, like hair.

There was *Fräulein* von Böcklin, for instance, who came up to the Kaiser's standard of beauty as the central figure of some *tableaux vivants*, arranged for the benefit of the Paul Gerhard *Stift*, in January, 1891. How he raved about her hands and feet, her arms and shoulders. Photographs of the young lady adorned his study, private bedroom, and the audience-chamber, but *Fräulein* herself never crossed the threshold of the Schloss or Palais, though Count Eulenburg proposed her for years successively at every festive occasion. Auguste Victoria simply put her foot down, and *Fräulein* von Böcklin's social success was a thing of the past. Vilma Parlaghy, the painter, experienced something similar. The Kaiser had advertised this woman like a circus, had given her gold medals in opposition to the findings of the Committee on Fine Arts of the Berlin Academy, and, finally, in the

winter of 1892–1893, invited her to paint his portrait. She came to the castle, primed for her *chef-d'œuvre*, but what a surprise! The Empress appeared at her husband's side at every sitting, and watched madame so closely as to make it impossible for the artist to do herself justice. I have to laugh every time I think of the astonished face Vilma made when I preceded their Majesties into the studio.

That the Kaiser's egotism leads him to regard all state resources as his personal property has already been mentioned. Everything is his. "My army," "my navy," "my ports," "my fortresses," "my funds" (meaning the state treasury), "my minister of war," "my chancellor," are expressions we hear as often as "my horse," "my boys," or "my speech." In the first week of August, 1896, when his Majesty suddenly returned from his Northland trip, an officer of the *Feldjägers*, whose name I have forgotten, was invited to second breakfast. "*Sehr schneidig*, this Herr Lieutenant," said William to her Majesty across the table, "but he came near ruining one of my torpedo-boats in trying to catch up with the *Hohenzollern*, on the way from Maeraak to Bergen. If he damages another of my vessels, he will have to pay for her."

Last year I heard William say at Wilhelmshöhe to his former teacher, Dr. Kius: "Your chief aim must be to inoculate into the rising youth the sentiment that the greatness of the empire depends upon the progressive strengthening of my navy."

There are certainly many reasons why old "Uncle Chlodwig" should be allowed to retire; but who, outside the inner circle, could guess the chief cause of his retention in office? "The Prince Regent of Bayern and the Kings of Würtemberg and Sachsen assume the right to be heard before I select my new Chancellor—*es ist zu toll*" (it's downright madness). "Next, his Grace of Pyrmont will undertake to run my government." This is his Majesty's own explanation, which, of course, does not efface the better and more likely one set forth in a previous chapter.

William's egotism even betrays itself in his generosity. He was fairly beaming with enthusiasm when he informed the Court, after the Paris Bazaar fire, that he sent his cheque for ten thousand francs to the Relief Committee. "All the world will talk about it—can man do more for a national enemy?" spoke his eyes.

In the evening, even before the newspapers had the story, a despatch arrived from Count Philli: "They will haul your Imperial and Royal Majesty to Paris in a thousand triumphal cars in 1900!" But when, a month afterward, Würtemberg was devastated by floods, the Emperor had neither money nor words of sympathy for the stricken ones. And for the military aid, furnished to the inundated Silesians in the fall of 1897, the towns and villages were promptly taxed: so many pioneer troops, so many marks for food, forage, extra pay, and railway fares. The communes protested: "Extra pay is out of the question. What is the use of having soldiers, if they do not come to the citizens' succour freely and without claims for remuneration?"

"Don't dispute," wrote back the Minister of War; "the men did extra work, they deserve extra pay." But if five hundred men are ordered to improve his Majesty's hunting-grounds, as they did at Rominton last year, that is called military "exercise," and compensation is out of the question.

In August, 1895, the Court moved to Berlin, and it was given out simultaneously that his Majesty's friend, an English gentleman of the highest connections, would spend some time with us; namely, the Earl of Lonsdale, or Lord Lonsdale as he is usually called, the same with whom the Emperor stayed at Lowther Castle the previous summer. Ah, the stories of English munificence revived by this piece of intelligence! Our Master of the Horse, *Graf* Wedel, estimated that the pleasure of entertaining the Kaiser damaged his Lordship's bank account to the tune of a million marks, or more, and Count Eulenburg, who was not very enthusiastic about that English visit —while riding to the hounds near Penrith his hunter threw him, and poor Augustus has been suffering from

headaches ever since—even Eulenburg had only words of praise for the noble Britisher, sentiments which the other gentlemen of his Majesty's suite, Adjutant-General von Plessen and Count Metternich, the latter a Councillor of our London Embassy, fully endorsed. They all expressed a willingness to make it as pleasant as possible for Lord Lonsdale, the only dissenting voice being that of the Empress, who could not forget that Lonsdale had introduced her husband to the many beautiful English women whose praises he sang for weeks after his return.

Lord Lonsdale's invitation was for the Pomeranian manœuvres; but he was to come a week before their commencement, to get a taste of German town and country life. Theatre parties, parades, excursions by land and water, were planned for the amusement of the great man, and everything pointed toward a round of pleasant days up to a few hours before his Lordship arrived. On that morning my mistress asked me to inspect his rooms and report to her any possible improvement that the House-marshal or housekeeper might have overlooked. I understood that the Englishman was to have Prince Henry's old quarters, and thither I went. To my utter astonishment, I found a number of servants engaged in covering up the furniture and removing flowers and plants.

"What does this mean?" I asked of the head footman.

"His Excellency has just sent word that the lord will be lodged at the Hotel Bristol. So these rooms are to be closed up again."

"Impossible," I said. "Are you sure there is no mistake? Her Majesty knows nothing of it."

"*Gnädigste Gräfin* may believe me that we asked not once, but half-a-dozen times. Think of the tips we are going to miss. It will be a loss of a thousand marks to us footmen alone."

Her Majesty did not know what to say to my information. However, the reception accorded to Lord Lonsdale by the Kaiser and Kaiserin was pleasant enough.

At the Sedan parade, a few days later, we women of the Court looked in vain for Lord Lonsdale. He was to be in the Emperor's suite, but in the long line of glittering uniforms no foreigner was discernible. Finally, one of our Anglomaniacs discovered his Lordship in the second or third row, halting at some distance behind the Emperor, the King of Würtemberg, and a host of small-fry Princes.

At the state dinner, held in the White Hall at 5.30 in the afternoon, the same distinction of rank was ostentatiously upheld; his Lordship had to sit down with a lot of cheap goldsticks and councillors, and when he came to look over his invitation for the grand tattoo in the *Lustgarten*, he found it entitled him to standing room on the Schloss terrace. There the proud Englishman stood with some of his friends from the banquet and a lot of officers' wives and daughters, listening to the music. I never would have believed it, had I not seen him myself. If he had raised his eyes, he could have seen their Majesties of Germany, of Würtemberg, and of Saxony on the balcony above, holding tea-cups in their hands. We were having supper in the state apartments.

I beckoned the House-marshal, Baron von Lyncker, to my side. "Was his Lordship not invited?"

"No."

"But he is our guest."

"Y-e-s," drawled the Baron; "still, here we have several Kings and no end of Royal Highnesses to look after."

"Surely, the Kaiser will be furious at the oversight."

"No oversight, I assure you. If his Majesty had wanted him to tea, as well as the banquet, he would have said so. He went over the list with Count Eulenburg more than once."

In Stettin and during the whole course of the manœuvres, Lord Lonsdale was treated in the same way as in Berlin: the Kaiser was charming to him when they met, but their meetings were few and far between, his Lordship being always lodged at some

distance from his host's headquarters and depended for his company on anybody but the high-born gentleman who had been his guest at Lowther Castle. He enjoyed the benefits of the imperial livery so far as carriages and mounts went, but the privilege accorded to every guest of distinction at our Court—regular attendance by *Kammerdiener* and footmen of the royal service—was denied him. And why did the Kaiser set the laws of hospitality at defiance?

Shortly before the Englishman's arrival in the capital, William learned from Herr von Zedlitz-Trützschler, Lieutenant in the First Guards, that Lord Lonsdale, when conversation had turned upon the claims of the European nobility, had remarked that he thought himself quite as good as the King of Würtemberg. It happened during the stay of the imperial party at Lowther Castle.

"A simple English nobleman as good as the King of Würtemberg!" cried his Majesty. This insult to a monarch was a direct blow at his self-infatuation. His ego was mightily worked up. "Have the goodness to call Moltke." Zedlitz was dismissed with a wave of the hand.

These were his Majesty's instructions to the adjutant: "Inform Count Eulenburg that during the whole of his stay Lord Lonsdale must be lodged at a hotel. We have room for him neither in the Schloss, nor in the royal castle at Stettin. He is to be treated with the utmost courtesy, of course, but the fact must not be lost sight of that he is a private gentleman, like Mr. Poultney Bigelow, for instance, nothing more. All Court and military officials must be advised of these instructions at once."

A certain Hamburg editor, who spoke disrespectfully of kingship, was also treated to an exhibition of the Kaiser's holy zeal for avenging affronts upon the royal dignity. Like most of his colleagues throughout Europe, the *Hansastaedter* had printed racy accounts of the King of Belgium's escapades. Thunder and Doria! the paper had scarcely reached Berlin when a suit for *lèse-majesté* was brought by the public prosecutor!

"I will prove my assertions," said the journalist.

"Such evidence is inadmissible; the intention to hold royalty up to ridicule and contempt alone counts."

The newspaper man got ten months. It reminds one of Pedro Arbues's dictum: "Innocent or not, let the Jew be fried."

It has been charged that the Kaiser's hostile attitude toward Greece during her late war was primarily dictated by his desire to oblige a handful of Berlin and Frankfurt stock-jobbers; the deal, if there was one, had, of course, nothing to do with the Guelph Fund story, mentioned elsewhere in this volume, but those in daily attendance upon their Majesties are more correctly informed. If Sophie of Prussia, now Duchess of Sparta, had not become an apostate, and incidentally if my mistress had not insisted upon horseback exercise and wearing awfully tight corsets during her advanced pregnancy, the Empress would probably have gone her full time with the child subsequently named Joachim. As it happened, the boy was prematurely born during a fit of passion in which her Majesty indulged upon hearing the news that her sister-in-law was about to embrace the Greek faith. Little Joachim is a weakling, given to epilepsy, and this condition the Kaiser charges to his sister's "bad conduct." *Ergo*, when her adopted country got into trouble, William never stopped to think that by hostile demonstrations he imperilled the throne upon which a Prussian Princess was to sit. His insulted self-love alone had a voice in the politics of the day, and its cry was for revenge. While her Majesty, whose Lutheran fanaticism is easily aroused, talked of "God's chastisement about to overtake Sophie," William openly avowed that he meant to bring the Duchess of Sparta to her knees. "I will have no rebels in my family," he said. That, while engaged in the pleasant pastime of correcting an obstreperous relative, he had occasion to serve his friend, the Sultan, was an afterthought no less satisfactory to the imperial Captain Bobadil than the opportunities offered for thrusting a thorn into Czar Nicholas's side, for pulling at the heart-strings of venerable King Christian, for enraging "Uncle

Bertie," and for giving his mother renewed proof of the full extent of her impotence.

This passion for brow-beating, for humbling one's dependents, and for striking terror into the hearts of the weak, is one of the characteristics of Cesarean insanity. It moved Caligula to wild laughter when, looking up from table, he observed two consuls on the other side of the board.

"What may provoke Thy Divinity's mirth?"

"The thought that it requires but a movement of my thumb to have your heads take the place of the boars' on yonder platter."

The craze to "show off" is egoism on its hind legs, —a very different brand from the harmless amusement William finds in pronouncing toasts to his grandmother in the words: "I drink to the health of the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, *Chief of my First Guard Dragoons*," or even from the speech the Kaiser made in deposing Count Waldersee as Chief of the General Staff, when he insinuated that, by removing him to the province "where her Majesty, the Empress, first saw the light," royal honours (instead of a slight) were conferred upon him.

Some of our courtiers excuse all the Kaiser does on the plea of impulsiveness, a condition which they take to be an attribute of genius.

But woe to others assuming like privileges! There was Nicholas, for instance, now Czar of all the Russias, but merely a gay young gentleman when a visitor at our Court on the occasion of Princess Marguerite's wedding, in January, 1893. No wonder a week of state banquets and parades, and parades and state banquets, made him long for less formal amusements. On the evening of January 27, when the Kaiser and Kaiserin and the rest of the nation's great were expecting his Imperial Highness at the palace of Count Schouvalow, then Russian Ambassador, he sent his regrets, adding that he was enjoying himself so hugely, it would be a shame to break up his party. As we sat down without the guest of honour, William's face was a study: wrath, tempered by surprise,

was pictured in every line of it. He showed his annoyance, yet seemed to be incredulous of the slight offered. As her Majesty expressed it, he thought for a time it was all a joke ; that any one in his sober senses should dare to affront him, he refused to believe. However, even before Roman punch was served, everybody in the festive chambers knew that the Czarovitch was at Duke Günther's in the Palais Pourtales, whither he had gone at one o'clock, and where a motley array of rakes, French marquises, and dancing-girls used to convene. They had a great time, those two royal bachelors and their friends, and when, finally, his Imperial Highness's adjutant reminded him that it was necessary to prepare for the supper at the Embassy, Nicholas vowed that he preferred an hour with his Mignon to an eternity with all the German Emperors and Empresses that ever lived. At the concert, I heard Count Schouvalow whisper to his wife: "The Kaiser insists upon reporting this business to the Czar, with all details, the Empress Frederick's protest and my own notwithstanding. As for Duke Günther, he told her Majesty that he will kick him out of the army."

The Duke of Schleswig, accordingly, got his walking-papers and Czar Alexander a furious letter complaining of his son's disregard for the decencies of life and denouncing his proclivities for vice. But twenty-one months later they carried Alexander to the Peter-Paul Cathedral a dead man, and Nicholas, the slurred and despised, mounted the throne of the Northern Empire. The period of uncertainty and anxiety respecting the Russo-German *entente*, that followed, until at last the Breslau meeting was arranged, must be still fresh in the reading public's memory.

The other incident alluded to happened at the banquet held in honour of Li Hung Chang at the Neues Palais in June, 1896. Toward the close of the repast, Gun-charger Rieger, on duty behind the Emperor's chair, handed his master a despatch. To tear open the envelope, read the message, and burst out laughing, was the work of a moment. These strange antics—they must have been

strange indeed in the eyes of a Chinese—the Bismarck of the yellow jacket and the three-eyed peacock's feather viewed with wonderment, and William, observing Li's looks, ordered the interpreter to inform the Viceroy that his, the Kaiser's, merriment was caused by the news of an important engagement of marriage. Now Li wants to know everything, whether it be the bottom of a *magnum*, or a family affair. So he sent word that he would be obliged if his Majesty cared to tell him which of his friends had made a fool of himself.

In answer the Kaiser handed the interpreter the telegram. It announced the betrothal of the Prince of Naples to Princess Helene of Montenegro.

Soon afterward the dinner came to an end, and Li, still puzzling, heard the Kaiser say a few words to Count Eulenburg which made that gentleman laugh even more immoderately than the Kaiser had done. "See what the joke is, and be sure to get a satisfactory answer at last," demanded the Viceroy impatiently.

"The Kaiser"—this was the answer brought back—"told Count Eulenburg that the grandmother of Princess Helene of Montenegro had been a peddler of chestnuts."

What his Majesty really said was this: "*Der ihre Grossmutter hat noch mit Kastanien auf der Strasse vagirend gehandelt.*" (This one's grandmother was but a street vagabond, peddling chestnuts.) His Excellency himself is authority for this corrected version, which he related to her Majesty and some of her ladies the same afternoon.

The news from Rome was an awful blow to my mistress, for up to then she had never given up hope that Victor Emmanuel would marry her sister Feo. The Kaiser's brutal joke helped her over the embarrassing situation.

"An excellent *bon mot*," she exclaimed; "it shall have a place in my diary."

If the saying had but remained between the covers of that precious volume, the key of which rests on her Majesty's heart! But it was thought good enough to

become a "winged word" among the friends of the imperial couple, and of course found its way to the Quirinal. Since then the alliance between Germany and Italy has practically ceased to exist.

As a flash of genius, too, those amiable pick-thanks praised the Kaiser's feat at Darmstadt (November, 1897), when, standing on the castle balcony with the Czar, he suddenly placed his arm about Nicholas's shoulders, thereby giving Herr Feisler, the imperial photographer-in-ordinary, on watch below, a chance for a sensational snapshot. Feisler promptly turned the negative over to a Berlin speculator, and soon the show-windows offered ocular proof "that the relations between Berlin and St. Petersburg were of the most cordial character." But when the pictures reached Muscovite dealers, ten days later, a decree of confiscation went forth; the photographs were pronounced apocryphal, and the official telegraph and news companies received orders to "display this piece of intelligence and give wide publicity to the fact that a fraud had been practised upon the public."

Then there was that greatest of Berlin military spectacles, the annual spring parade on the Tempelhofer Field (June 1), which in all sorts of weather attracts Berliners by the hundred thousand, besides tens of thousands of visiting foreigners. Last year (1897) the heavens were most considerate,—a beautiful, clear sky, neither excessive heat nor annoying dust,—the masses promised themselves most elaborate pageants. Everybody was quite sure that not only the usual two, but at least three, passings by of the Guard Corps would take place. But the reverse happened. The troops had no sooner filed by their Majesties once, than the Kaiser delivered a short *critique*, and that done, trotted off the field, amid ominous silence and facing a most disrespectful populace. By the time the gala coaches with the ladies of the Court were driven along the lines, however, the public had recovered its voice.

"If they can't attend a review together without fighting, let *her* stay at home." "Why did she not get

off her horse and into her carriage?" "Next year we will all bring a box of cold-cream along." With such and similar remarks, coined for our benefit, we were bombarded as we slowly wended our way to the spot where her Majesty's landau was halting.

'Heavens," I said, "they are talking of the Empress!"

'Is it possible?" replied Countess B——, with a little shudder.

When, finally, we caught up with her Majesty's suite, the reason for the abrupt ending of the parade was learned. After drawing up in line, the Kaiser had eyed his wife's uniform and accoutrement critically, and missed the special decoration given her by Queen Victoria, portraits of Victoria and Albert, surrounded by a chain of brilliants. He was furious. "How could you lose that precious jewel?" he demanded, disregarding the presence of his adjutants; "next you will drop the Regent[1] in some gutter, and I shall have to make good the loss."

"I do not know," stuttered the Empress. "Frau von Haake fastened it to my breast."

"Haake did? Well, I just long to give her a piece of my mind!" And in order to jump on that miserable maid with as little delay as possible, the puissant war-lord cut in two the proudest military review of the year, to which Princes by the score and all the Ambassadors and Ministers had been invited, while half the town had turned out in his honour! And Paul of Russia was called a madman for running a mile to cane a soldier! The ornament, by the way, was returned by an honest workman, who found it in the grass and who got less than the legal[2] fee as reward, and no recompense for his travelling expenses to Potsdam.

"One step above the sublime makes the ridiculous, and one step above the ridiculous makes the sublime

[1] A large diamond, the finest of the Prussian crown-jewels. The crown-jewels are only lent to the incumbent of the throne, who has to make losses good.

[2] In April, 1898, the man brought suit against the imperial treasury on that account. Case yet undecided.

again."[1] After chasing, Paul-fashion, from the parade to wrangle with a servant, his Majesty sat down to dedicate a number of Bibles for the new Berlin garrison church, inscribing them as follows:

"I will walk among you and will be your God and ye shall be my people." "Ye shall walk in all the ways which I have commanded you." Without me ye can do nothing." He signed each sentence "Wilhelm, *Imperator, Rex*," and omitted quotation-marks, as well as book, chapter, and verse, by which to indicate the origin of the phrases.[2] "They shall stand by themselves as expressions of my royal will," he said to her Majesty.

In September followed the "divine-appointment" speech at Coblentz, and in December Prince Heinrich's declaration of self-abasement: "I will carry forth the evangel of your Majesty's sacred person; I will preach it to those who want to hear it and also to those who don't want to hear it." If this be not progressive bigheadedness, it would be idle mockery; yet no one acquainted with William and his ways will consider the alternative for a moment. On the contrary, it is a well-authenticated fact that his Majesty has taken Vespasian's death-bed jest—"*Vae, puto deus fio*" (Methinks I am becoming a god)—in brutal earnest from the beginning of his reign. I have now before me a copy of a despatch his Majesty sent to Prince Bismarck from Constantinople on November 9, 1889, all the ladies and gentlemen of the Court, not in the Kaiser's suite on that occasion, having received fac-similes of the message, to keep them posted on the imperial party's progress.

"We had an excellent voyage from Stamboul," says the imperial navigator,—"weather splendid, colour-effects and illuminations on land and sea surpassing anything heretofore known. Yesterday the air was so clear, I saw

[1] This *mot* from Thomas Paine's "Age of Reason" (published 1795) seems to be the original of Napoleon's remark after his return from the disastrous Russian campaign: "From the sublime to the ridiculous, there is but one step."

[2] The phrases are transcribed from Leviticus xxvi. 12; Deuteronomy v. 33; John xv. 5.

the peaks and the continent of Pelagomes all at once, a sight which never before greeted mortal eyes."

Here we find "Prussia's ally of Rossbach and Dennewitz"—thus his Majesty usually refers to the Almighty—engaged in shifting clouds and manipulating the heavenly lights to give William an unheard-of treat; but with all that, the Kaiser really indulged in unwonted humility by describing his optics as mortal, for in his every-day speech, as well as in public addresses, he claims to be all-seeing. Thus he warned the marines at Kiel, on November 23, 1893, to behave when visiting foreign countries, as his "eye was watching them, whether at home or abroad, by day or by night."

"More wonders," said one of the Emperor's sisters; "I suppose he will next invite Luna to sleep with him, like a certain Roman Emperor, who regarded himself as a god."

In the last week of June, 1897, my mistress received most alarming news from Heligoland. "In the course of some manœuvres," said Count Waldersee's cypher despatch, "the Kaiser narrowly escaped drowning. For God's sake, beg his Majesty to desist from going to sea in heavy weather."

As a matter of fact, there had been no naval exercises; William got a wetting while attempting to cross from the *Hohenzollern* to the Hamburg liner *Columbia* in a raging storm. His unreasonable love for having everything his own way led him to attempt the impossible at sea, as Suetonius tells us Caligula did before him. The Cæsar, we gather from that chronicler, liked to embark during tempestuous weather, "merely to show his prowess and in order to persuade the masses that he exercised a certain influence over the elements." The people of his household were forced to accompany him, and one of them, named Silanus, was executed for absenting himself from the dangerous outings. It looks almost as if the fear of sharing Silanus's fate (in moderated form) had something to do with Waldersee's appeal to the Empress, for "Uncle Alfred," too, swallowed a bucketful of water on the occasion when William got his fill.

The Court of Berlin

The Kaiser's divine-appointment speech at Coblentz, August 31, was a fitting *résumé* of his claims as God's viceroy, repeated over and over again since that 15th of June, 1888, when, in a "general order," he pronounced the astounding notion that he was "accountable for the army's honour and success to his grandfather," who was then dead one hundred days.

That the "Hohenzollerns took their crown from God's altar," and that "they are responsible to no one but the Almighty,"—how often do we hear this story, how easy would be its denial upon proofs mouldering in royal Prussian archives! According to these proofs, six million of Thalers and ten thousand stalwart bodies of subjects—enlisted, pressed, and stolen—were paid and furnished by Frederick I. to the proud Hapsburger before the curtain rose upon the Königsberg comedy, and even then it was half spoiled by the newly made Queen taking a pinch of snuff just as the ceremonies were at their height! And the man who conducted the negotiations, bought up the Austrian, the German, the Muscovite, the English, and the Pole, and did not succeed in winning over either the Holy See, France, Denmark, or Sweden, the man who actually forged the bauble for which you, O William, claim heavenly origin, was Kolbe, lover to Countess Wartenberg, the *Kurfürst's maîtresse en titre* (but not *de facto*, for very good reasons), a publican's daughter.

The only really new thing in the Coblentz utterances is the statement that the Kaiser's *Herr Grossvater* was "born a king, God's chosen instrument," while as a matter of fact the first William's kingship depended upon his predecessor's much-doubted ability to have an heir.

Happily the couplet proved true which the King of Bavaria[1] is supposed to have addressed to his Prussian brother, and which read:

[1] These verses are in reality by Heinrich Heine, and are altogether untranslatable. The meaning is: "Brother of Hohenzollern,—never having had use for women,—do not blame the Wittelsbach on account of his Lola Montez."

"Stammverwandter Hohenzoller—
Sei dem Wittelsbach kein Groller;
Zürne nicht ob Lola Monter,
Selber habend nie gekonnt es."

The mad Frederick William died without issue, and the *Kartätschen Prinz* (Grapeshot Prince), as William I. was styled by his loving Prussians then, mounted the throne.

As for Prince Henry's Kiel speech, the criticisms upbraiding the amiable Heinrich for what he said are as little justified as would be a wholesale condemnation of the phonograph for a false note sung into one of Mr. Edison's machines by a music-hall tenor. I know his Royal Highness well, and this very knowledge convinces me that the expression "the evangel of your Majesty's sacred person" did not originate with him. "Sacred person," by the way, is a phrase that occurs frequently in the records of the descendants of the mad Juana of Spain, the Roman-German Emperors Charles V. and Rudolph II. Indeed, an anecdote dealing with the latter says that he once admonished his physician, who was trying to locate the imperial patient's stomach under the quilt, by the thundering words: "Stop, you are touching the holy Roman belly."

To return to Prince Henry. He has never originated anything. A careless, unlettered youth, he spent his first years of manhood as riotously as his slender allowance permitted. To save him from himself, he was married, at the age of twenty-six, to his cousin Irene, an amiable woman, of domestic habits, but without an ounce of *esprit*. "His father," the late Princess of Hohenlohe once said, "was just such a man, but fortunately he had a wife that prodded him on and forced him to acquire knowledge and assume at least a semblance of interest in literature and the fine arts."

Wedlock made of Henry a thoroughly self-satisfied person; he was master of his house, and responsible to no one for his likes and dislikes now, except, of course, such as affected the service. But being devoted to the sea, he takes restrictions of that kind as something akin

to the inevitable. As to the relations between the royal brothers, they were never hearty and are frequently strained. Princess Irene and my mistress dislike each other, and the men, quite naturally, take their wives' parts. As a subordinate officer, however, his Royal Highness has always done his very utmost to please the Emperor. While in the family circle the Kaiser is generally spoken of as "big brother," "big cousin," and so forth, Heinrich never fails to designate and address him as "Lord of the Sea," or "High Admiral." He consults him about the merest details concerning his command, and professes to be thoroughly happy only when his Majesty approves of his conduct as a mariner. Twice, or oftener, I heard him say to William during his occasional visits to Berlin and Potsdam: "Do not forget about that speech of mine for the Marine Club dinner," or, "If you cannot come" (to this or that opening, or naval exercise), "be sure to send me the speech. You can talk it over the telephone and I will have a stenographer ready at the other end to take it down, word for word." Within the knowledge of some male colleagues of mine, the Kaiser, too, was heard to say once or twice: "Now I shall have to telephone the speech Prince Henry is expected to deliver to-morrow. To be the intellectual giant of one's family has its drawbacks."

There lives not a man or woman at Court who does not intuitively feel that Prince Henry's speech of December 15 was conceived and dictated by the person addressed, from the opening words: "Exalted Emperor, Puissant King and Master, Illustrious Brother," to the closing phrase: "Our sublime, mighty, beloved Kaiser, King and Lord for all times, for ever and ever—hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!" William wrote it word for word, as he did a dozen other tirades inflicted by his brother upon festive and official gatherings, and if I feared not to ruin the careers of some men in office, I could name people of high standing who saw the manuscript.

In regarding his "mission" of chief arbiter of the world as an evangel, as a revelation of the grace of God

to fallen man through him, the anointed mediator, the Kaiser follows a practice established by the majority of, if not by all, victims of insane big-headedness.

Every once in a while the Palace is startled by information that somebody—Bebel, Liebknecht, or Richter—will rise in Parliament to denounce the Kaiser in plain and unmistakable language as a madman, or the same intention is imputed to some member of the royal or grand-ducal diets in Munich, Stuttgart, or Carlsruhe. As parliamentary speeches enjoy unlimited immunity, the Kaiser's friends and the various cabinets throughout the Fatherland are ever on the alert to prevent a scandal of that kind, for if the thought now seething in the brains of many were hurled among the masses, the government would be seriously embarrassed, the Empire's prestige would suffer immensely, and the catastrophe itself might be very much accelerated. It is an acknowledged fact that the discrowning of the Kaiser's mad relatives plunged the one into hopeless melancholia and exasperated the other so as to drive him to suicide, and as William's mental condition, in its present aspect, appears to be identical with the initial stages of Frederick William's and Ludwig's disease, everything is avoided that would seem like a repetition of the mistakes made in the treatment of those monarchs.

The poor Empress knows nothing of these sad suspicions and fears; to her loving eye the Kaiser's increasing eccentricities are but flashes of genius—that genius of which he likes to talk to her. She even regards lightly—or as attributes of a kingly sportsman—those physical debilities in William and certain traits in his character which pathology includes among the symptoms of insanity of power—his tendency to cruelty and his hankering for blood. When I speak of these *stigmata* here, it is not done in an effort to prove the Emperor insane (such an undertaking would be presumptive on the part of a layman); I merely desire to complete the picture of William II. as he is, physically and mentally, by setting down facts and recording observations which it was my privilege and misfortune

to experience and witness, leaving the reader to draw his own conclusions.

Doubtless the telegrams to the Empress, following in the wake of all imperial hunting excursions, and announcing the number of game killed, are very gratifying from a sportsman's standpoint; but, considering that William's reign yielded not a single act of pardon, or of humane kindness, these records of blood appear the reverse of harmless. It is one thing to measure strength and wits and the velocity of one's own or one's horse's legs with the beasts of the forest, and another to butcher game, released from the pens, by the hundred, as the Kaiser does every fourth day in the year. The Indian Sultan Toghlak once set out with a large hunting-party for the district of Beiram; when he arrived in the territory, he told his attendants he had not come to kill beasts, but men, and "without obvious reason," says his biographer, Ibn Batuta, "he began to massacre the natives. After putting the citizens of a large town to the sword, hundreds of others were given over to the Sultan's elephants, which, throwing them in the air, caught them on knives fastened to their tusks, or trampled them under foot to the sound of trumpets and the beating of drums." That is only one historic example of many, where the hunting fever has developed into murderous frenzy.

During the last five or six years of his life, Ludwig II. used to vary the monotony of his exertions for inventing new building projects by studying minute accounts of battles and other gory happenings, and afterward, his brain aflame with visions of blood, he would fall upon a flunky or chasseur to strangle, bite, cut off his ear, or otherwise maim him. The Bavarians are still paying pensions to royal servants who lost a nose, an eye, a leg, or the use of other limbs, by their master's cruel mania.

Some time ago the Emperor was boasting that he had killed his fifty-thousandth head of game. "When I think of the number of animals in my forests," he added, "I feel like Frederick the Great at Kolin when he shouted to his squadrons: 'Dogs, would ye live for ever?' I

hope to double and treble my shooting record during the next ten years. If a King cannot go to war, he must be content with practising in the forest. It keeps one in fighting trim, anyhow."

I talked about the foregoing with one of the physicians who attended his Majesty's late cousin. "I did not know that the Kaiser was infatuated with the chase," said the doctor, "but might have guessed it, as the character of his speeches portends an unmistakable craving for blood. His constant references to war, his incessant admonitions to the army that it must die for him, his abominable, oft-repeated summons to the soldiers to hold themselves in readiness to slaughter their parents, brothers, and sisters with gun, sabre, or lance, are analogous to the ravings I heard from the lips of Ludwig time and again. My late patient frequently spent whole days in devising new tortures for imaginary culprits, and the signing of death-warrants (most of them fictitious) gave him rare pleasure."

How the Emperor feels about signing death-warrants, I do not know. I know only that he signs every one submitted to him, and that in all writs of execution, issued since Emperor Frederick's demise, there occurs the phrase: "His Majesty having refused to interefere, the delinquent is to die by the sword," etc. Like most selfish persons, William is hard-hearted, and never pardons anybody, save duellists or officers punished for exceeding their authority. He approves of insane big-headedness even in others. Previous to the William the First celebration, many thousand petitions arrived in the Kaiser's mail, but his Majesty, being busy with the preparations for "*Willehalm*," refused even to see the extracts and recommendations which the Minister of Justice had prepared from the papers sent in. "I have no time for miscreants," he said to Herr von Lucanus: "let a few men suffering for defending their honour, sword, or pistol in hand, be picked out and I will set them free. As for the rest, they must take their medicine." When Professor Mommsen declined the title of "Excellency," it was whispered in the Palace that his Majesty's refusal to interfere on behalf of the numerous writers and authors

imprisoned for their political convictions prompted the historian; but, as a matter of act, Mommsen acted on the score that it would be absurd to accept honours at the hands of a crazy person.

The Munich medical man already quoted went on to say that consultation with the Emperor's physicians convinced him that William was very much like Ludwig in respect to physical ailments and their consequences. "Like the Kaiser, my old master was possessed of an abnormal fear of illness, and the very thought of bodily pains as the result of indisposition, a dental operation, for instance, unmanned him." To his nervous condition the doctor attributes Ludwig's general cowardice.

But in fact the Kaiser is a courageous man. I had occasion to verify that at the review of the Second and Third Guard Lancers on Bornstädter Feld in May, 1892, when his mount, a high-stepping stallion, excited by the presence of so many other horses, bolted twice and could scarcely be kept under rein. The Empress and Prince Henry, who had come over for the day, urged his Majesty again and again to change horses (there is always a second in reserve); but he refused to be persuaded, and all of us passed a dreadful hour, expecting every minute to see the sovereign become a victim of his obstinacy. At the Berlin riot of 1891, he displayed a valiant spirit, but at times, when suddenly confronted by danger, his nerves become unstrung, and the Prussian eagle, *nolens volens*, flaunts the white feather.

Members of the *entourage* who accompanied his Majesty to Proeckelwitz in June, 1892, tell a saddening story to the point. It appears that his Majesty commanded his host, Count Dohna, to fetch him from the station with a double team of royal blacks, which he had admired on a previous visit. William took a seat on the box at the side of his Lordship, who was driving, and everything went well until the drag turned into the village street, where the horses shied at the patriotic chants of a peasant's chorus; and who would blame them? Seeing the capers of the *carrossiers*, these harmless folks doubled their enthusiasm, and to bring matters

to a climax one of them waved a flag. Now the leaders rose on their hind legs, the cross-pieces got loose and began knocking against their pasterns, and off they were at a furious rate. Dohna, with keen presence of mind, let the reins of the runaways slip and hung the more forcibly on to those of the shaft-horses, which, of course, tried to follow the others. He let them run for a while, but without entirely losing control, and as they were about to plunge into a bed of harrows, with teeth exposed, he succeeded in checking the team. A gallop of a couple of hundred yards on freshly ploughed ground finished the blacks, and from there to the castle they went steadily.

The Kaiser put his arm round his host when the horses started off, and when the danger was past pressed Count Dohna's hand, but did not say a word. When the drag arrived at the manor-house, he had to be helped down from his seat. The ladies, who received his Majesty at the door, say that his face was deadly pale and his lips compressed. Their greeting and congratulations he did not seem to observe, but crept to his room, assisted by his chasseur and adjutants.

When, an hour later, he appeared at dinner, he had not yet recovered his speech, and after vainly endeavouring to swallow a spoonful of soup, rose and retired, supported by Dr. Leuthold, who allowed no one to see his patient. The Kaiser missed breakfast, but attended luncheon, still looking pale and haggard, Then, for the first time, he greeted the ladies of the house and spoke a few words to his host, but when a sprightly young miss at table referred to the accident, he bade her keep silence by an imperious gesture of the hand, while a tremor seemed to run through his body. He would not hear of going to the chase, and left next day for Berlin without having fired a shot.

It is said that the Kaiser had an epileptic fit after retiring from table on the night of the accident; feeling the premonitory symptoms of *grand mal* the moment he entered the dining-room, he withdrew after making a show at doing the polite thing. As warnings, in the shape of certain peculiar sensations, up to a short while ago,

always preceded his spells, it has been possible to restrict the knowledge of the Kaiser's affliction to his family circle, the highest officials, and to members of the household.

Aside from the Proeckelwitz case, which lacks confirmation, as the attending physician, quite naturally, refuses to be quoted, I know of only two incidents where news respecting the Kaiser's sufferings from that dread malady leaked out. In the midsummer of 1891, some two weeks before their Majesties went to England, the Kaiser was found in his dressing-room at the Neues Palais, lying unconscious across a fallen arm-chair, which he had knocked down in toppling over. The chamber-maid Amelia discovered her master when, receiving no answer to repeated knockings, she had entered the room in pursuit of her duties. You may imagine the hubbub that ensued. The girl, not satisfied with alarming the men-servants, brought all the women, from Empress to scullion, to the scene by her lamentations. At first the cry went forth that his Majesty had been murdered; simultaneously the theory of suicide was advanced, and when, finally, the doctors arrived, they found two of the wardrobemen engaged in pouring cognac down the patient's throat. As old cognac of the twenty-five marks a bottle brand is always kept in the Emperor's private rooms to liven him up when he feels faint, the servants thought they were doing the correct thing, and were inconsolable on hearing of the danger involved by such heroic treatment. However, as at the same time they had opened the Kaiser's locked teeth and pulled his tongue into place, they had done something to relieve the poor man.

The other attack happened at the Berlin Schloss, also in the Kaiser's own chamber and in the presence of one of his wardrobemen. The attending physical circumstances were the same, and so was, curiously enough, the explanation to the household by Court-marshal Count Eulenburg: "His Majesty has a peculiar way of throwing himself backward into an arm-chair," said his Excellency to the heads of departments, who are expected to disseminate the information received at head-quarters

among the members of their staff—"he throws himself into a chair with full force, and under the circumstances it is not to be wondered at that a *fauteuil* breaks down under him occasionally." The Emperor himself, after each stroke, talked at table of the *verfluchte*, worm-eaten chairs that were considered good enough to be placed in his chamber. The idea that any Court-marshal should assign infirm pieces of furniture to William-the-Spendthrift is too preposterous to admit of discussion. Lately, I am told, the Kaiser's malady has taken a more aggravated form, the premonitory sensations having ceased. The *falling-sickness* comes upon him suddenly nowadays, and, as in the two instances noted, he lapses into insensibility without a moment's notice when *grand mal* takes hold of him. His Majesty is therefore at present in more imminent danger of suffering injury by the falls peculiar to the disease than ever before, and as a precautionary measure all porcelain vases with cut flowers have been removed from his rooms, the order including even the massive silver receptacles the Empress gave her husband for a birthday present. Two of them, filled with the choicest flowers, stood formerly on the Kaiser's desk, and two more on the centre-table of his dressing-room. My mistress had a good cry when *Kammerdiener* Brachwitz told her they had been locked away by order of Count Eulenburg, who was acting on the advice of the body-physician.

All the women the Kaiser ever loved were noted for the delicacy, whiteness, and perfect proportions of their hands. His admiration for Madame Herbette is said to have begun and ended at her slender finger-tips. But since her Majesty's jealousy and the anonymous letter fiends weaned him of woman's society, this fancy, at first a mere weakness, has abnormally increased.

Affecting a general disregard of women, as has been his wont for the last two or three years, the Kaiser of late flatly refuses to notice any lady he meets in society beyond a mere recognition, unless she has fine hands. If she satisfies his idea of beauty in this one respect (she may have the nose of a Kalmuck, be chicken-breasted or

hump-backed), he will draw her into conversation, compliment her, and, on going away, kiss her hand,—once if under fire of scrutinising eyes, half-a-dozen times and oftener when unobserved. I have frequently been obliged to advance silly excuses when hearing his Majesty criticised for wearing many rings on his fingers. The truth is, most of those jewels are duplicates of ornaments he noticed on female hands while admiring and fondling them.

Of course, it is obligatory at Court to wear gloves, and her Majesty, who is not blessed with an exquisitely shaped hand, insists upon it that this *usance* be strictly observed, but at supper, after a ball, hop, or concert, the Kaiser always asks certain ladies of his household and of society to remove their gloves. "I have as little use for a gloved hand and arm as for a veiled lady in a redingote," he said once.

"A funny simile,—where does the redingote come in?" cried Princess Feo of Meiningen.

"It stands for the arm-covering, *Du Naseweis*" (you know-all).

The Kaiser, you must know, while addressing his devotions first and above all to pretty hands, is enchanted when a finely modelled arm crowns the *chef-d'œuvre.* He is not very generous, but he can be quite munificent when selecting presents for women with fine hands and arms, even if the gifts are semi-obligatory ones. When brooches or breast-pins are distributed, his Majesty takes no interest in the ceremonies, but rings and bracelets he likes to put on himself.

One of the titled ladies of the household describes the mode of her "decoration" by the Emperor as follows: "He bade me to be at the Schloss (the Court was staying at Potsdam then), on a certain day at two o'clock in the afternoon. I had to come veiled to prevent possible recognition.

"When I entered his Majesty's private room, he was standing in the middle of the chamber. His face was not so pale as usual. 'Take off your veil and coat,' he said, and until I had complied with his command his

manner expressed impatience. I wore a waist with elbow-sleeves garnished with long lace. 'This is excellent,' said the Kaiser, as I pulled off my gloves. He went to the alcove and selected from among several jewel-boxes one of formidable size. From it he took a bracelet in the form of a snake, and, drawing it out to its full length, placed it around my arm. It extended over the elbow. I thanked the Kaiser, and he kissed my arm again and again between the golden circlets, and what struck me as peculiar," concluded her Ladyship, with an innocent giggle, "was that his Majesty held my little finger in his hand all the time."

Poor, vain creature! she thought, and she thinks to-day, that she was the *première* of this comedy, and that the imperial stage-manager shelved it after this one performance. Yet there are dozens of women and girls in Berlin and Potsdam, in Kiel and Breslau and Königsberg, hugging similar trophies of royal favour, but all are not chatterboxes.

A little while ago I was admiring a new-fashioned sleeve which had just been perfected in the Empress's millinery rooms. It belonged to an evening demi-toilet, and was slashed in half-a-dozen places on and under the arm. "It's very novel," I said, "but what an amount of work! These slashes are as carefully sewed as button-holes."

"Ah," smiled the simple-minded seamstress, "our papa" (meaning the Emperor) "must always have space for his kisses. If you once give him a finger, he wants the whole arm."

The Emperor never forgets a hand after he has seen it once, a circumstance which keeps her Majesty in a turmoil of jealous rage. Sometimes, when they drive out together, William interrupts her conversation to say: "Dona, look at that woman's hand. I mean the lady who came out of So-and-So's store. It is worthy of a sculptor."

As the Kaiser watches the women pass, and those at the windows and in carriages, he finds occasion to repeat this sort of comment more than once. Really, one can quite understand the Empress's wrath.

CHAPTER XVI

THE EMPRESS

On November 1, 1892, the riding-school of the Berlin *Marstall* (royal stables) was gay with the women of the Court and society. His Majesty proposed to make this year's Hubertus hunt the event of the season, and all were going to help him do it. Hence the preparations. Some of us had to become used to fresh horses, others were obliged to learn anew the intricacies of the various bugle-calls. Quite unexpectedly the Hereditary Princess of Meiningen walked in with her lady-in-waiting, Baroness Ramin. I saw at once that her Royal Highness had indulged in a lively breakfast, as they say in Berlin, for her face was flushed, and she addressed pleasantries to everybody, and even promised to ride *à la* Florence Dixie if somebody would lend her a pair of breeches.

"Nonsense!" cried the Princess of Hohenzollern, *née* Princess Bourbon. "Lottchen is bragging, I assure you, ladies; you all know that she wears the trousers. What more does she want?"

"The real article, cousin, the r-e-a-l article," retorted Lottchen, adding, with a shrug of the shoulders: "what suffices for the *ménage* will not do at all for the *manège*, especially when such puritan critics as Countess Brockdorff are about."

Then turning to *Mademoiselle* von Ramin, she said, loud enough for everybody in the ring to hear: "Now I will show you how my sweet sister-in-law" (meaning the Empress) "mounts."

She had her horse brought round to a platform reached by three steps, and, ascending laboriously, raised

herself on tiptoe and let herself fall into the saddle with a thud that caused the horse to stagger.

"Just like a majestic sack of flour, is it not?" she cried. "The more pity for the beast." Then she rode off, urging the chestnut to all sorts of caprioles and fancy steps.

Princess Therese was at her Royal Highness's side like a flash, and as they cantered about, each trying to outdo the other in feats of daring, both laughed boisterously.

But if courtiers have long ears, Nemesis has legs of corresponding calibre. Indeed, in this case the dread goddess must have worn seven-league boots, for twelve hours after the impertinent words had fallen from privileged lips all who had been at the *Marstall* were quietly informed that ladies were not wanted at the forthcoming outing—neither *Hofdamen*, nor Princesses of the blood royal! It being the first time that the Meiningen, Hohenzollern, and Hohenau coterie were taken down publicly, so to speak, the sensation in polite circles was tremendous, and while few quarrelled with Princess Charlotte for what she had said, all agreed that the Empress was right in asserting her position as vigorously as she had done.

Next day it was my good fortune to attend her Majesty at Schloss Stern, the starting-point of the Hubertus hunt in Grünewald, and I must say her appearance was quite the reverse of the picture drawn by the Princess of Meiningen. Was it the English hunting-costume that proved so very becoming to the sovereign lady, or was it the presence of the Emperor in his red coat and silk hat, or the recollection of the victory just won? Auguste Victoria looked fresh and rosy and resplendent as she galloped over the frozen ground, herself and Countess von Bassewitz being the only ladies in the "field."

Of course, the whole hunt was arranged with a view to fatigue their Majesties as little as possible, and, accordingly, the boar was set free at a point where he could be brought to bay within a quarter of an hour after the start, a programme carried out with surprising promptness and

despatch this time I say this time, for the reader must not run away with the idea that in our sphere promises are always kept or commands always obeyed. As a matter of record, royalty employs in its army of retainers scores of laggards, and while I admit that all-highest personages boast no special virtues entitling them to a higher standard of ethics than Mr. Smith or Mrs. Brown can lay claim to, I must not disguise the fact that they are subject to the same routine of annoyances as yourself and neighbours.

I remember that on the occasion of a visit to the Neues Palais by the late William Walter Phelps, who was American Minister in Berlin in the early nineties, her Majesty offered to show the baby to this amiable gentleman, and, being on duty, I was requested to fetch the child.

"May it please your Majesty," I said, bowing low, "unless I am very much mistaken, the Prince drove out with his nurse a couple of minutes ago."

"That is impossible, Countess," said the Kaiserin. "I distinctly told Mrs. Matcham she must not venture to leave before lunch."

To make sure, I repaired to the nursery, where I found that my surmise was correct.

"But why did nurse disobey my instructions?" exclaimed her Majesty, when I returned without the child.

"Begging your Majesty's pardon, she told Countess Brockdorff she knew herself when it was best to take out the youngster."

I had naturally hesitated to make this blunt report; but the Kaiserin took the English woman's impudence good-naturedly, and turning to Mr. Phelps, with a smile, said: "You perceive, Mr. Minister, we are all in the same boat with respect to servants. They are the real masters of every household. If you want to see that baby, I shall have to temporise with Mrs. Matcham."

To return to our subject, the master of the hunt does not always show so lucky a hand as on the occasion described. The very next year, in 1894, the boar gave

his keepers the slip too soon, and, having gained nearly four minutes' time over the hounds, led them a merry chase through Grünewald toward Spandau, their Majesties following with the well-peopled "field"—that is to say, the latter kept together during the first mile or two, but, later, redcoats began to drop out, until at the *Ha-la-lit* ("there goes") scarcely a baker's dozen reported, among them, on his high English hunter, the Emperor, very proud of his achievement, but also (this was a matter of common report at Court) not a little vexed over the *faux pas* that turned the customary royal pig-trot into something resembling a real live fox-race.

Kaiser Wilhelm felt, I suppose, that for him to engage in such violent exercise was tempting fate, considering that, while his right arm only is of practical use in the management of the horse, exceptional care must be exercised for the protection of the other—not an easy undertaking while galloping among trees and through thickets. An overhanging branch, or refractory behaviour on the part of the mount, may be attended by the gravest consequences.

The Empress, so Countess von Bassewitz told us in the evening, made the gentlemen wait quite a long while before she hove in sight, escorted by her *Kammerherr* von der Knesebeck, who was loud in her denunciations of her Majesty's horse, which, he cried, lost his wind after the first quarter of an hour.

Exciting as the hunt had been for their Majesties, both Kaiser and Kaiserin missed the best part of the fun. That, as usual when her Royal Highness is around, followed in the wake of Therese Trani, the spouse of the Hereditary Prince of Hohenzollern.

Madame Therese, a daughter of Louis *des Deux Siciles*, is the life of every party, whether she visits the petty Court of Sigmaringen and, by her frivolities, causes her royal mother-in-law, a Princess of Portugal, to squirm, or interpolates her speech with *risqué* German phrases, affecting not to understand the meaning of the words; whether she takes pot-luck in the mess-room of some Potsdam regiment, or encourages her husband's

young comrades to drag her along the lawn by her feet in imitation of a practice introduced by a famous ancestress, the *Dauphine*, Duchess of Burgundy (this latter sport is sometimes carried on in the garden of their Highnesses' villa in Augusta Strasse, Potsdam); whether she comes to Court and maddens "Dona" by coquetting with the Emperor, or entertains her neighbours at a state dinner with an account of her first confinement, which unexpectedly occurred at a second-rate Mecklenburg watering-place, while her *accoucheuse* was in Berlin and the *layette*, ordered from England, was in the keeping of the custom house; whether she dances, plays cards, smokes cigarettes, or attends a "churching,"—there is always something to remember of one's meeting with this lively young woman.

Herr von Bachmayer rode in Madame Therese's train, too, after that obstinate pig, but he was not alone. Far from it. There were, besides Karl Anton, a host of cavalrymen and sports.

Her Royal Highness had the best horse, and a start of fifty paces. "Heigh-ho!" "*Houp la!*" "*Ventre à terre!*"—she was bound to get to Spandau before their Majesties had passed Hundekehlensee, if she kept it up. Her horse did, but not her Royal Highness.

When Therese was urging her steed through a clump of trees with overhanging branches, the tragedy of the forest of Ephraim was certainly most foreign to her mind. But history repeats itself. Her Royal Highness's skirt caught in the branches as did Absalom's hair, and she was left suspended, while her long-legged hunter pressed on. The men witnessed the bloodless accident with delighted wonderment, but before they could reach the unhappy King's daughter, she was on her hands and knees, and a wide rent in the seat of her trousers showed where her tailor had skimped the cloth. The skirt was still hanging overhead.

Now a dozen cavaliers drew rein, and dismounting, assisted Therese to her feet. She struggled. "*Non, on;* don't you see I *must* sit down?"

"No," said *Herr* von Bachmayer, in tones of authority,

"Your Royal Highness will stand with your back to the tree, while we will rearrange your skirt in front."

Sound advice this, and it was quickly followed.

"Now will your Royal Highness gaze at the tree for a while?" suggested the Colonel.

"*Oh, ich habe so Scham!*" ("I am so ashamed!"), faltered the Princess, between giggles.

"All unmarried men turn about face," cried *Herr* von Bachmayer. Ours is a well-disciplined army, and the young men obeyed, while Princess Therese turned round, and, standing in the attitude of the Venus de Medici, allowed Karl Anton to draw enough hair-pins from her head to fasten what was left of the skirt on to her waist. Meanwhile, one of the reserve horses had been fetched, and the merry crowd started off again.

In the evening, her Royal Highness returned home in the coupé, secured at Spandau. The story, with all details, has above related, is her own. She told it to her chum, the Charlotte of Meiningen, adding, with a silvery laugh:

"As I heard all those men galloping up to where I was the eg, I was reminded of the question the nuns of before ant put to General Dumouriez" (who commanded von de vading French army in 1792): "'*Quand est-ce, que* of her *serons violées?*'"

the fi*Herr* von der Knesebeck's criticism of the royal

Eter that failed was not a mere excuse, as might be both ised; all her Majesty's horses are selected more fun. reference to handsome appearance and strength follow to juvenile fire. Indeed, Auguste Victoria seldom Hered one under the age of ten to twelve years, although,

Ma general rule, a decade is the age-limit for animals *Sici* the Kaiser's stables. Moreover, her horses are so peperfectly trained and of such lamb-like disposition that, heto quote once more the Princess of Meiningen, "they s will not wink an eye or move an ear except at the most gracious, 'all-highest' command." Her Royal Highness's bit of comedy, depicting the Kaiserin in the act of mounting, is likewise founded on fact: a portable platform is kept in all the royal stables and parks.

I have frequently attended her Majesty on horseback, alternating with *Fräulein* von Gersdorff and Countess Bassewitz in this pleasant duty, our cavalcade including, besides one of the chamberlains, the saddle-master and one or two grooms, but it always looked to me as if her Majesty was not fond of the sport. I think she practises riding merely to be in the fashion, to exhibit her courage, and because she has an idea that she looks well *à la* Amazon—fallacies all of them. An Empress should command the mode, instead of submitting to it; fortitude, she might argue, is but a matter of temperament, or apprenticeship, if it comes high; as for cutting a dashing appearance, that depends entirely upon circumstances.

We have seen her Majesty radiant with good-nature and looking exceedingly well in her festive hunt-dress as she rode out from Castle Stern, but her every-day habit, a black costume and silk hat, is not at all becoming. And in uniform she looks a perfect fright, not on account of the dress so much as because of her cocked chapeau, which replaces the cuirassiers' steel cap. It is large, of white felt, brim pinned thrice up, the crown bent in and trimmed with white ostrich-tips; in front an *aigrette* of brilliants stands out, "fine feathers" all; but the combination is entirely unsuitable to the imperial lady, who, to make matters worse, is obliged to add a tulle veil to shield her weak eyes from the sun.

Riding and walking are the only bodily exercises my mistress indulges in, aside from dancing once or twice a year at a certain private ball held at their Majesties' apartments in Berlin. These *soirées dansantes* must not be confounded with the great Court balls in the White Hall, when all is state and pomp and *ennui*, and the Emperor and Empress leave the throne only once during the whole course of the evening to say a few official nothings to some Minister, Ambassador, or other dignitary. The annual dancing parties are held in the *Pfeilersaal*, once the *salle d'armes* of Frederick the Great, where his body-guard used to hold forth. The lofty parlour now affords communication between both Majesties' private chambers, one end of it opening into the Empress's *salon*,

where Watteau's celebrated painting, "The Embarkation for Cytherea," delights the eye.

A few days before our private ball in the winter of 1893, my mistress told me she was going to trip the light fantastic in accordance with the Emperor's wishes. "I will therefore trouble you to examine the barrier of living plants, hiding the musicians, most carefully," she continued, "for I do not want those men to see me. There should be no loop-holes, and if you find it necessary to have a screen behind the shrubbery, order one by all means."

I suggested that a screen might spoil the airy decorative effect.

"Maybe," replied the Kaiserin, "and then the Emperor would be displeased. Well, you must make the plants do, but have them so placed as to form an impenetrable wall."

"I beg your Majesty's pardon," I made bold to remark, "Court history has it that your great ancestress, Queen Louise, was not only passionately fond of dancing, but was fired with the ambition to dance in public. According to reliable chroniclers, she went through many a minuet at the Opera House yonder, while thousands of her loyal subjects looked on and applauded her efforts."

"Yes, yes, the Kaiser has spoken of these events many times, and Queen Louise's example encourages me as much as anything to take up the practice," mused her Majesty, adding, with spirit: "but all that notwithstanding, I cannot bear the idea of gyrating round under the vulgar eyes of hired attendants and servants. And another thing, Countess, when you hear me order the Court-marshal to fetch a dancer, please see to it that the doors leading into the adjoining apartments are closed, the lackeys remaining on the outside. I will not take a step until told, by a motion of your head, that all is attended to."

These all-highest wishes were carried out at the *soirée* in every particular, and at the close of the entertainment I no longer wondered at the purport of it all. Dancing,

I fancy, is a natural gift capable of improvement; its different steps may be laboriously acquired, may even become a matter of memorising, but unless there be talent at the bottom of it, the performance will certainly prove lame and devoid of grace.

Auguste Victoria was endowed with virtues more sturdy than nimble, and dancing is entirely out of her line; I dare say she feels it herself, though pride would no more allow her to admit tnis than her want of efficiency as an *equestrienne*, her pretensions being the outcome of the divine-appointment illusion, in which the Hohenzollerns believe as earnestly and which they accept as unreservedly as did any Shah or Grand Turk of the eighteenth century.

"By the Grace of God!"—these five, short words cover a vaster volume of sins against good sense than even charity! Here we have a sovereign lady who in all respects lives up to her representative duties as the consort of a powerful monarch, a woman of fine carriage and fully conscious of her limitations in reference to affairs of state, yet imbued to such an extent with the notion that no one has a right to surpass her in feminine accomplishments as to let this fancy degenerate into a fixed idea. That she aims to be the best dressed, the most dignified and most gracious Queen, the most earnest worker in the cause of the Lutheran Church, are ambitions to be commended; but why also the best rider, the best dancer?

And the ludicrous part of it is, these august personages never dream that their affectations are transparent to the people about them. Thus I was told by the Emperor's Adjutant, Count Moltke, that when, on the occasion of a family excursion on horseback, he pointed out Prince William, praising him for his steady seat, her Majesty said: "Ah, he inherited his horsemanship from me," a remark which caused the Emperor to sniff with impatience. Still, the truth of their mere humanness is often enough brought home to Kings and Queens.

Here are a couple of anecdotes to the point, both

dating from Hubertusstock, whither their Majesties retire occasionally, attended by a small retinue consisting of two adjutants, a Court-marshal, a lady-in-waiting, a *Kammerherr*, and (this is the height of economy according to Court usages) one body-physician for both husband and wife.

In October, 1890, the Kaiserin accompanied the Emperor to an evening's rut-of-hart-shooting in a certain section of the forest, where the imperial Nimrod was so certain of making a big haul that he promised victims of his rifle on all sides.

The pair drove off with high expectations, the Kaiser in his new "hunt uniform," the Kaiserin wearing a gown of white cloth, silver-braided. But though conditions seemed favourable — moon discreetly hidden behind clouds, wind blowing out of eminently correct quarters —some strange agency managed to frighten the stags away and out of reach as often as a fine pair of antlers came before William's barrel. The Kaiser allowed himself to be fooled in this fashion three long hours, until, finally, losing patience, he ordered the horses brought around. Getting into the carriage, he noticed an old gamekeeper, who stared at the Kaiserin in a rather disrespectful manner. "What is it, my man?" inquired the Emperor, who was beginning to suspect the cause of his ill-luck; "perhaps *you* can tell us why no confounded deer would come within range this evening."

"To be sure, Majesty" (the common folk of Germany always omit the "your"), "plain as daylight, that. Any fool knows that animals are frightened by white clothes."

The remark was so apropos that the Emperor overlooked its rudeness, and, turning to his wife with a mock bow, he exclaimed: "*Da hast Du die Poste Mahlzeit*" ("That settles your bacon"), "Dona. In future I shall know better than to take a fashion-plate hunting with me."

The disgruntled couple arrived at the chalet after midnight, and I heard the Kaiser say he would take supper

alone, meaning in company with his gentlemen only. Whether the Empress knew of this intention, I am unable to tell, but I do know that her Majesty was in a fearful temper during our solitary meal in the boudoir, though the cook had provided her favourite dish: potatoes baked, and cold pork. Everything and everybody was in the wrong, and even the beloved Haake came in for her share of scolding.

"I forgot all about it, and, of course, none of my ladies knew enough to remind me that I possess not one garment fit for hunting." With these words the Kaiserin wound up a long series of complaints, adding: "Let Lampe be commanded by telegraph to get up a full-skirted hunting-costume of the usual material, with green velvet trimmings, within forty-eight hours."

"But his Majesty being so particular as to colour," I ventured to suggest, for the gamekeeper's blunt talk was already known at the castle, "would it not be better to send a sample of cloth to Frankfurt?"

"A good idea," cried our mistress, her face lighting up. "I tell you what you can do, Countess. After his Majesty has retired, get the valet to cut a sample from one of the turnings of his suit and enclose that to Lampe, sending a *Feldjäger* to the railway station with the letter. And be sure to use an envelope with the imprint: 'On his Majesty's Service.' That will carry it through by noon to-morrow."

The sample was secured in the manner directed. Lampe proved equal to the occasion, and her Majesty's seasonable equipment arrived by the end of the week, giving such satisfaction that ever since it has formed an important part of the Empress's outing wardrobe. The costume is of greenish-grey material, tailor-made, with buttons cut from antlers. With it a small, round, green felt hat, adorned by a tuft of woodcock feathers and a simple green silk cord, is worn, while a tiny *couteau de chasse* hangs from her Majesty's belt.

Another occasion where the purple-born were forcefully reminded of the equality of all things human arose during Court mourning for the late King of Würtemberg,

who died October 6, 1891. To escape tedious ceremonies in honour of that royal reprobate, their Majesties repaired to Hubertusstock shortly after the obsequies in Stuttgart, taking with them even less of a retinue than is customary at this retreat. As the Kaiser hunted all day, and there was absolutely no one for whom she cared to dress up, her Majesty seized the opportunity to wear some of her oldest mourning-dresses, and thus started out one morning in a simple gown devoid of all ornamentation, and wearing a Berlin hat to boot.

The royal lady intended to take a stroll in the forest all by herself, but, of course, no Queen is ever permitted to do so, her commands or entreaties notwithstanding; so I went ahead, while a lackey followed her Majesty at a respectful distance.

The Empress had not been out more than a quarter of an hour when she met the letter-carrier, an old man whose leather bag is filled only on very rare occasions—at Christmas and during the Kaiser's occupancy of the castle. As it is a notorious fact that old Friedrich's head swells in proportion to the quantity of mail he handles, I felt some slight apprehension of impending trouble when I observed her Majesty approach this pompous landlubber-martinet.

"Have you letters for Majesty?" ask the Kaiserin, imitating the vulgar mode of referring to the King.

"That way a fool may get caught, my girl," bristled up the veteran, "not a man like *me*" (he struck his breast so that the bronze medals decorating it began to dance about), "and, besides," he continued, with a leer in his eye, "those black gloves of yours might dirty the beautiful Kaiser-letters."

"Oh, my husband won't mind that; give me the letters."

"Your husband? Have a care, you dressed-up wench—for you don't look smart enough for a *Köchin*" (cook)—"lest I report you for insult to Majesty."

At this juncture I thought it high time to make my presence known, and as the *Leibjäger*, too, arrived on the scene, the zealous postman quickly collapsed, and,

throwing himself on his knees, begged the sovereign lady's pardon. Of course, it was granted; it would have been ridiculous to take the old fool seriously. By her Majesty's command, I gave him a mark that he might drown his terror in a bottle of *Schnapps*.

CHAPTER XVII

THE WALDERSEES—THE EMPRESS'S FAVOURITES—THE BERLIN RIOTS—THE EMPRESS FREDERICK

THE Empress has had a friend; she has none now. Or one may say she has had two: Countess Waldersee and Pastor Stoecker. The latter is a dead man, politically and socially; the Emperor himself arranged his funeral, nor was it one of the first class, like Bismarck's or the Chief of Staff's.

The former Mary Esther Lee, of New York, has been variously designated in the public prints as a person of most extraordinary influence with their Majesties—as a sort of Egeria, appointed to instruct the modern Numa not only with regard to the forms of worship to be introduced, but also in general government matters. If the Kaiser bounced Bismarck to rid himself of somebody who had grown to love power and to think himself indispensable, why should he hesitate to drop the Waldersees, man and wife—or perhaps I should say *wife* and man, for Mary Esther is the moving spirit of that house—why, I ask, should he scruple to cashier these persons as soon as public opinion endowed them with an importance well-nigh over-shadowing the throne?

"The Moor has done his duty: the Moor may go!" There was no Bismarck to be held in check by fear of the ever-ready successor in 1891; exit the all-powerful Chief of Staff! As to his Countess—having ceased to be a necessity to Auguste Victoria—there was no reason for temporising on her account.

Princess William that was had been in her Excellency's leading-strings, as stated in preceding chapters; out of

the gawky girl the Countess Waldersee had made a lady capable of carrying her own weight and holding her tongue—when she had nothing to say. *Madame la Maréchale* also taught her charge—though the insincere aspects of it were foreign to her own mind—that religion, properly hung to the wind, makes an excellent cloak for insignificance. During the first year after Auguste Victoria's ascension to the throne, Countess Waldersee proved useful, too; on public occasions and in society she was an infallible counsellor, and a much less imperious one than Countess Brockdorff. Besides, when the latter whispered to her newly made Majesty, everybody suspected her of giving advice, while Madame von Waldersee's tips passed for mere pleasantries.

But to be for ever reminded of debts of gratitude is so tiresome. I believe no one at Court regarded the removal of the Waldersees to Altona with pleasanter anticipations than my mistress did. I attended the last audience her Majesty granted the Countess. It was painfully formal; probably both women desired it so, each for reasons of her own. To give it a friendly turn, the Kaiserin asked her Excellency, in the end, for her photograph, "as a souvenir of their long acquaintance."

This latter fact by itself should suffice as a denial of the numberless stories about the intimacy alleged to have existed between my mistress and the General's wife. Intimacy between a Royal Schleswig and the daughter of David Lee, of the United States! Intimacy between the German Empress, Queen of Prussia, and the wife of Eléonore Hoffmeyer's descendant! The persons who first gave utterance to that Canterbury tale must have gathered their ideas of her Majesty's character from the tittle-tattle of silly women who act as "barkers" at our charity bazaars. At one of these, held at the War Ministry, I believe, I first heard Countess Waldersee spoken of as the "Kaiserin's aunt," a title probably invented for no other purpose than to please her Excellency's own friends. I carried it home with me, and their Majesties adopted it, but not in a friendly spirit. When the Kaiser alludes to the *Volksschulgesetz*, that has failed,

or similar measures, in conversation with his wife, he sometimes says "thy aunt" or "thy uncle"; when the Kaiserin speaks of Pastor Stoecker nowadays, maybe she calls him "my aunt's friend" or "my uncle's political bedfellow." That the Kaiser never regarded Countess Waldersee as an equal or a favourite is evident from the fuss he made when he granted her Excellency permission to wear the Queen Olga decoration, given her by the King of Würtemburg. If he had raised her and her husband to the princely dignity, he could not have shouted louder than he did about this act of cheap courtesy.

Count and Countess Waldersee attended most of the Court ceremonies held at the beginning of the present reign, and her Ladyship's fine laces and diamonds were much admired then; but as soon as Court mourning was over and the noisome *fêtes* at the Schloss and palace were inaugurated, she commenced sending her "regrets," pretending to be in failing health. That her Excellency was ever received *en famille*, or even without running the gauntlet of notification to and from the Court-marshal or grand-mistress, etc., is an invention pure and simple. It is true, however, that Prince and Princess William often visited at the General Staff building during the last year of the old Kaiser's illness, yet their calls were not of a social nature. About that time, William had religion on the brain, and the pious Countess was just the woman to encourage such a craze.

If the widow of Prince Noer had remained single, the Kaiserin might have continued to regard her as a friend and relative even after her elevation to the throne, but as Countess Waldersee—never. Yet her Majesty likes Count Waldersee as far as she likes anybody outside of her husband, her children and herself, and William likes and fears him at the same time.

Of the ladies and gentlemen of the service, only one, *Herr* von der Knesebeck, Vice-Grand-Master of Ceremonies, enjoys his mistress's confidence and friendship. After what has been said of Countess Brockdorff, I need hardly mention that this lady is not a favourite. Dames

of the Court Fräulein von Gersdorff and Countess Keller are old maids with the faults of their class; that is especially true with regard to the latter, called "*Speck*-Mathilde" on account of her oft-professed axiom, that anything (*Speck*, *i.e.* bacon and the like) is good enough for people who are not Empresses or *filles d'honneur*. Countess Keller is buyer-in-ordinary to her Majesty, and it is this lady who selects for the house-servants those gorgeous presents—cotton petticoats, wash-rags, glass vases, and knitted gloves—that grace the palace Christmas-trees. It cannot be denied, though, that she is a thorough courtier. Any impossible thing that her Majesty may order, Countess Keller enthusiastically approves of. "*Speck*-Mathilde would rather bite off her tongue than inform her Majesty that a square peg will not fit into a round hole," says Princess Frederick Leopold, and I believe she would.

Clara von Gersdorff also rejoices in a sobriquet. Old and young in the palace speak of her as *Rühr*-Clara (Sentimental Clara), or *Der süsse Dusel* (Sweet Dizzy). The first nickname has reference to her loud, long-drawn-out mode of speech. If, on leaving her room, she gives orders to her maid through the open door, her voice can be heard all over the staircase. The other epithet is supposed to describe her character, which for ever fluctuates between high-soaring idealism and the pettiest of mundane nothingnesses. She is blonde, carries her forty years well, has a pale, broad face, square shoulders, and walks as if shod with cuirassier boots.

When I see my mistress in such hands as Keller's and Gersdorff's, I am always reminded of what Walpole wrote about Christian VII. of Denmark: "He is a genteel enough figure, but surrounded by a pack of curs whose interest it is to make him one if they can." Auguste Victoria might have turned out an altogether different woman from what she is, had she not fallen in with narrow-minded, paltry characters the moment she entered upon her new sphere of life in Berlin.

The Kaiser hates Gersdorff more than the grand-mistress—hates and maltreats her with sarcastic references

to her figure—for no other outward reason, apparently than because her large, red, and ugly hands offend him.

If Countess Bertha von Bassewitz were not twenty-three and pretty, she might win her Majesty's love, for she is an agreeable, talented, and high-minded young woman whom everybody likes.

Baron Mirbach and Count Keller, the Grand-master and *Kammerherr*, respectively, are stereotyped Prussian officials, cringing before their mistress, and intolerably abusive to all of lesser rank than their own. *Herr* von Mirbach tries to make himself indispensable by catering to her Majesty's church-building schemes; but while acknowledging the Baron's talents as a business manager, the august lady is far from liking him as a man.

Both Keller and Mirbach hate the amiable Bodo Knesebeck, whom the Empress Frederick once called "the only gentleman at her son's Court," but as he is a most deserving man, besides being a favourite, their intermittent intrigues are of little moment. Before entering upon the service of Auguste Victoria, Baron Knesebeck was the confidant of the old Empress Augusta, who left him quite a sum of money; he is to-day the only non-relative of the royal house who participates in the occasional family dinners. *Herr* von Mirbach and the House-marshals must order and arrange these affairs, but have to withdraw and make room for their subaltern as soon as the dinner-hour strikes, or "as soon as they have counted spoons and covers," as they say in the palace. This expression dates, so far as it refers to spoons, from Count Moltke's ninetieth birthday (October 26, 1890), when the King of Saxony had to go without soup at the state banquet because he found no spoon at his place, and because it was against etiquette either to ask whether he was not hungry or to send a footman to get the missing article. And when, after the spring parade of 1896, some Bavarian officers were to be entertained in the White Hall, it was discovered that no seats had been provided for them. House-marshal Baron von Egloffstein had ordered covers for all the Prussians, but the South

German allies had been entirely forgotten. The two *faux pas* nearly cost Egloffstein his position.

But to return to *Herr* von der Knesebeck. He spends every other week in her Majesty's service, and is liberal and kind-hearted. Where his colleagues, Mirbach, Keller, Lyncker, and Eulenburg, discredit the Court by their niggardness, he exhibits the *savoir-vivre* of the old *régime*. So he gave an organ-grinder, whom her Majesty, during her stay in Sassnitz, in the summer of 1892, had ordered to play a whole morning for the children's benefit, twenty marks. Thereupon—that is, when the bills were audited in Berlin—cries of terror, amazement, and indignation.

"A double gold crown to a miserable Dago!" Baron Mirbach and Count Eulenburg pronounced such recklessness unprecedented, and said they did not know what the Minister of the royal house would do about it. "Really, we cannot pass this bill without special authorisation."

"If that is so," said *Herr* von der Knesebeck coolly, "I herewith deposit twenty marks to remain in your Excellencies' hands while the matter is in abeyance. Damn a man who is not willing to risk a trifle to give the Queen's children a good time!"

The case is still in abeyance.

So great is her Majesty's confidence in *Herr* von der Knesebeck, that, if at all possible, she submits to him every little matter concerning her public conduct, either verbally or in writing. In the course of the year, Empress and chamberlain exchange hundreds of letters, some of the Kaiserin's being five and six pages long.

Bodo Knesebeck saved the Empress from making herself ridiculous, and from seriously compromising her husband and the government, during the Berlin riots of February, 1892. Incidentally the chamberlain saved our mistress from her lord's lasting displeasure on that occasion, which probably counts more with her than anything else. For weeks we had prepared for the great carnival ball of February 25, when the invited gentlemen were to appear for the first time in English Court-dress,

an event William looked forward to no less eagerly than a girl does to her début in long frocks. For the ball, the late King's favourite, *première ballerina* Marie Koebisch-Wolden, had arranged a gorgeous revival of that most graceful dance, *menuet à la reine*, which was to be tripped before the throne when the evening's festivities were at their height. My mistress meant to surpass all her previous efforts in the matter of personal adornment.

At last the festive day had come. Early in the morning the entire stock of crown-jewels, all excepting the crown itself, were brought to the royal dressing-room, and her Majesty, Countess Brockdorff, and *Frau* von Haake spent hours making and remaking new combinations of the stones and ornaments, most of which can be put to various uses, as pins, buttons, buckles, brooches, etc. Then, all of a sudden, the cry ran through the Schloss's chambers: "Berlin is in revolt!"

"There will be no *menuet*, rather a *Carmagnole*," lamented the anxious; "instead of beribboned and belaced silk coats, the blouse; in place of honeyed words and pretty toy swords, 'pipe in cheek, loaded canes on thigh,' as in the days when they sang '*Vive le son du canon.*'"

Baron Mirbach sent me to my mistress to prepare her for noisy scenes in the neighbourhood of the Schloss. I found the Empress in the room facing the great fountain, running excitedly from one window to the other. In the square below, people were assembling in groups, talking and gesticulating.

I delivered the message and, of my own accord, added: "His Majesty will not drive out this morning."

"And if he loves me, he will remain, he *must* remain with us until this awful revolution is quelled."

"I entreat your Majesty to be calm," I made bold to say, as Countess Brockdorff kept silent; "according to the papers, these people want bread and want work; they have no thought of violence. Besides," I said, "*Herr* von Richthofen has sent the entire police reserves to the Schloss. There are fifty men at each entrance, and more guarding the cellar-openings and the waterside.

All the corridors are patrolled, and a dozen men are on the lookout on the roof."

"The roof!" cried the Empress, as if swayed by a new fear. "O *Gräfin*" (this to Countess Brockdorff), "they may throw bombs on the roof and destroy us all! I must go to see the Kaiser at once."

Second breakfast commenced half-an-hour earlier than usual, and we hurried through its four courses, following their Majesties' example. The Kaiserin's eyes were red with crying, and some minutes before dessert the children came in, a thing that does not happen more than once or twice a year. His Majesty loves his little ones in his own way; that is, he likes to keep them at a distance. If brought into personal contact with the youngsters, his sense of decorum revolts, and he does not know what to do with them, except to criticise their dress or military demeanour.

"I am not going on a journey," he said, and, looking at the Crown Prince, added: "You and your brothers have not come to say good-bye?" The Empress bowed her head and whispered something while the Kaiser leaned over the table, holding his hand to his ear.

"*Dummes Zeug*," he said, loud enough for all to hear, and pushed back his chair; "I am riding out as I do every day in the year; there is no use making a scene, Dona!" He kissed some of the children, fondled the heads of the younger ones, and, drawing the Empress's arm through his own, walked out, preceded by the House-marshal and his adjutants.

When, a quarter of an hour later, the Empress came from his room, she declared: "Thank God, the Kaiser will take his pistols along, one in the right pocket of his trousers, and one in his coat pocket." Then her Majesty led the way to the state apartments, where we took our stand at the windows of the Knights' Hall, to see William ride from Portal V. a few minutes later.

As he passed, his Majesty looked up, and the Empress followed him along the front of the Schloss through the Black Eagle chamber, the Red Velvet chamber, and the old chapel. As we crossed over to the windows of the

picture-gallery, he waved his hand for the last time, and we saw him spur his horse into a quick trot. Only then it was observed that the Emperor was without his ordinary escort of grooms and gendarmes. Merely Adjutant von Moltke and one other military gentleman accompanied him. The Kaiserin was beside herself. "He will be killed, I know he will be killed, and myself and the children will come next. Let us flee from this room, in front of which, as the Kaiser says, kingship was put to the greatest indignities."[1]

Her Majesty ran to her own apartment, and through the speaking-tube ordered that all her children be brought down at once. She was pale and was trembling. Seeing the jewels, where they had been left in the morning, she began to replace them hastily in the boxes. "Haake," she said, "shall arrange all my own jewellery in like manner; everything must be packed at once."

"But to-night's ball?" suggested Countess Keller.

"There will be no festival," said the royal lady resignedly, "or a very different one from that promised; namely, when the Kaiser is saved, and joins myself and the children at the Neues Palais."

Countess Keller, in her usual complacent fashion, at once acquiesced. "I beseech your Majesty not to go without me," she shrieked hysterically. "I will protect, and, if need be, die for my beloved Empress."

Meanwhile the rioting had been begun in earnest on the *Schloss Platz* and in the neighbourhood of the *Lustgarten*. The strikers and out-of-works, who had willingly made room for the Emperor when he passed by them—who had even doffed their hats and caps at the royal radiance—suddenly recollected their self-imposed mission and began to offer trouble to the police. They refused to move on, and threatened the horses of the mounted *Schutzleute* with violence unless they kept off their toes. As yet, they had not worked themselves up to a state

[1] Standing on the balcony of the Schloss in March, 1848, Frederick William IV. was ordered by the revolting populace to salute the citizens, killed by the soldiery the day before, by taking off his hat, and complied with the request.

of excitement which menaced the troopers themselves. The rears of the backing steeds formed the base of popular assault.

"See there, there!" cried the Empress. "I told you this was a revolution. The crowds are getting thicker and thicker; they will overthrow the police and then attack the palace. And the Kaiser is away. We must go at once. Our only safety lies in flight."

"Fetch Knesebeck," I whispered to *Mademoiselle* von Gersdorff; "he alone can set our mistress right. We shall all be disgraced if this mad plan is carried out. Be quick, before that toad-eating Keller drives the Kaiserin thoroughly crazy."

Herr von der Knesebeck appeared after a little while, suave and smiling as usual. He did not exasperate her Majesty by underrating the danger. He pointed out to her that the Schloss was the safest place for herself, her children, and her jewels. "There are about five hundred men, soldiers, *Schutzleute*, and detectives inside these walls," he argued, "and if an attack were made, fifty thousand others will be on the outside before they begin to batter down the gates, and the gates are the strongest in the Empire. Now let us assume that your Majesty would choose to leave for Potsdam. At least four carriages would be needed to carry your Majesty, the Princes, and the *entourage* to the station. Then there is the escort. Your Majesty would not like to brave the mob alone, and the royal livery, re-enforced by bayonets or sabres, might exasperate the people. But let us say, for argument's sake, that we get out of Berlin without trouble. If this is a revolution, as your Majesty thinks, it will not be confined to the capital. It will follow us to Potsdam; and the Neues Palais is to the Schloss what Heligoland is to Gibraltar."

"In Potsdam we have the subterranean exit,"[1] faltered out her Majesty.

"True, and if your Majesty decides to use it, at any time, you will find yourself among your soldiers," said

[1] This is a conduit leading from the basement of the Neues Palais to the barracks of the Lehr und Wehr Battalion opposite.

Herr von der Knesebeck impressively,—"among your soldiers there as you are under their protection here.

"And now," concluded the chamberlain, with a little fib, "I see her Excellency is making signs; matters of toilet demand immediate attention, I dare say." (*With a bow*) "If your Majesty has anything to communicate to the Kaiser, who, I understand, is to come back by three o'clock, I am at your Majesty's commands."

"Then you think we are really safe?"

"Safe?" laughed *Herr* von der Knesebeck,—"your Majesty is pleased to joke. Would the Kaiser leave you and the Princes if there was a shadow of danger within ten thousand miles?"

Brockdorff, Keller, Gersdorff, Haake, and myself all took up this cue and dwelt upon it and enlarged upon it, and before her Majesty could work herself up into another fit of fright the maids had taken her in hand to begin preparations for the night's ball. When the Kaiser returned, he went at once to the Empress to tell of his adventures with the mob: how he had "cowed the ugliest of the rioters by a single look"; there had been no hostile demonstrations "where *he* showed himself"; in some places he had even been cheered. "And" (here his Majesty had a good laugh) "in the *Thiergarten* half-a-dozen fellows tried to thrust petitions into my hand. Some of them I let run beside me for a good quarter of an hour, and not till they were well-nigh exhausted did I order Moltke to take their papers. Among others, one exceedingly fat person engaged in this exercise, and I thought he would expire as he tried to keep pace with Extase" (William's favourite horse).

The rest of the evening passed in preparations for the ball, and the feast came off in a blaze of glory. We had our *menuet à la reine*, while the Berliners danced the *Carmagnole* to the tune of crashing show-windows and demolished doors, as our guests reported under their breath, when out of ear-shot of their Majesties and the high officials. "I came in a second-class *Droschke*, and the crowd allowed me to pass without a murmur," said one ministerial councillor, "but my old Excellency had

to ask a *Schutzmann* to take the place of his groom at the *Puppenbrücke*, and the man of the law was obliged to use his weapon freely to enforce the right of way."

"I hope there was no blood spilled," said I.

"Mortal wounds were not dealt. The *Schutzleute* had orders to use the flats of their swords only, but there will be many sore heads, nevertheless, to-morrow. Besides, all the police stations are filled with prisoners, and about fifty stores—bakery and provision stores, most of them—have been sacked."

The situation continued semi-threatening for two days longer, for the newspaper accounts of the dazzling Court *fête* had been red rags to the mob. From early morn till night angry masses collected about the castle, shouting and throwing their arms about, and persons leaving the Schloss on foot were sure to be greeted and followed by derisive grunts. Once or twice gentlemen coming from Court were jostled by the crowd, whereupon the Emperor, who was an interested witness of the scenes, telephoned to *Herr* von Richthofen to have the *Lustgarten*, the streets, and the three bridges leading to the castle cleared. In the charges by the mounted policemen and by *Schutzleute*, fifty or sixty persons received sabre cuts and others were ridden down, the Kaiser standing at the balcony window that saw his grand-uncle's submission to mob law, and viewing the bloody sallies with grim satisfaction.

On February 27 the children clamoured loudly for an outing. They had been locked in the house for three days, and confinement was telling on the little ones. But her Majesty would not hear of the proposed carriage ride. Only after Major von Falkenhayn had patrolled the streets in citizen's dress to ascertain the popular animus, and reported that the riotous movement had entirely subsided, were the children sent to the *Thiergarten* in an old carriage, driven by a man in every-day clothes and preceded by similar grooms on horseback, who were to keep well ahead and communicate with the police along the route. The police, by the way, had played a distinguished part in the Emperor's outing on

the first day of the riot, too. Several hours before his Majesty rode from Portal V., a thorough *Sicherheitsdienst* had been arranged along the line William intended to travel: *Schutzleute* in uniform or civilian dress walked among the rioters, listening to their talk and occasionally packing off an over-loud individual, while others kept the road open and the people moving. Besides, a mounted *Schutzmann* was posted on every street-corner to watch the houses and passers-by. And this line of vigilance extended over all parts of the *Thiergarten*, which, moreover, was traversed by police and detectives in cabs and on fleet horses galloping up and down the bridle-path like private gentlemen. The royal *Marstall* had sent a hundred grooms to the park to watch over the master and act as *galopins* for the police lieutenants and captains stationed at different points. The garrison was confined in the barracks,—"and, moreover," said Baron Richthofen, to whom I am obliged for these minute statements, which I was to repeat to her Majesty, "and, moreover, the Kaiser had his two six-shooters. But, believe me," added the chief of police, "there was no need whatever of his Majesty's bellicose preparations. If there had been the slightest apprehension of violence, the Kaiser would never have been allowed outside of the Schloss."

"But if he had insisted? He has an iron will."

"Ah," said the Baron, "there are moments in a sovereign's life when his will is of no more account than that of a raw recruit."

During all these days her Majesty was in such fear and excitement that even *Herr* von der Knesebeck could not persuade her to abandon the idea of flight altogether. On the morning of the twenty-sixth the Empress had her jewels packed anew,—officials had taken charge of the crown-jewels after the ball,—and her belongings were kept in a state of preparedness for sudden removal throughout the week.

To return to the subject of her Majesty's intimates. Among the persons of the household, as pointed out, *Herr* von der Knesebeck is the only one in whom the Kaiserin places implicit confidence, but at the same time

he is not of "sufficient birth" or rank to be regarded as other than a faithful servant. For a *Kammerherr* in actual service, whatever his qualifications of heart and head are, is little short of a titled flunky. When he is on duty, he must be at his mistress's beck and call the same as the *Kammerdiener*. If her Majesty drives out, he follows in a second carriage, or, when the children are taken along, in the fourth; if she visits people, he has to wait at the door of the antechamber; if she goes to bazaars or the theatre, he trots in front of her or behind her, disbursing her alms, buying her tickets, and seeing that her chair is in the right place; in short, a *Kammerherr* is all but a lackey in name, the only difference being that he wears gold buttons on his coat, instead of silver lace, and carries around umbrellas, opera-glasses, and muffs, instead of wraps and footstools. To a *Kammerherr*, the Empress does not speak so broadly about being brought to bed as to a *Kammerdiener*, but she would as soon allow a *valet de chambre* to smoke in her presence as treat a chamberlain on a footing of equality. And royal valets, mind you, have been regarded with suspicion ever since Louis XV. sent half-a-dozen of them to the Bastile, when, by accident, he overheard a fellow whisper: "Come and let's play with the Duchess of Burgundy." Her Royal Highness was that *Dauphine* who considered it exquisite fun to have her servants drag her along by her legs in the gardens of Versailles during moonless evenings.

Among non-royal women, her Majesty at one time looked upon Princess George Radziwill and Countess Goertz with feelings akin to friendship. As before stated, both are French women. The first, *née* Marie Branicki, is the wife of a former lieutenant of the *Garde du Corps*, who, during a long residence in Potsdam and Berlin, succeeded in accumulating a few million marks of debts. Now the couple hold forth on Prince Anton Radziwill's Polish domains. Two things drew Auguste Victoria to Princess George. Her Grace was as capable of throwing away money as the Royal Highness and Majesty, and both excelled for a time in the matter of

bringing forth a child year by year. The Kaiserin married two years before Countess Marie did, in 1881, had a child in 1882 and one in 1883, 1884, 1887, 1888, 1890, and 1892. *Comtesse* de Branicki married in 1883 and had children in 1884, 1885, 1886, 1888, 1889, and 1894,—four boys and two girls. In some instances they followed each other at intervals of ten months. Countess Goertz, too, would come up to Napoleon's sarcastic estimate of "woman's greatness." Married in February, 1876, she had a child in January, 1877, and before the year was up was delivered of number two. With her other four children she allowed herself more time.

Since the Radziwills moved from Berlin, Princess Marie's name has never been mentioned at the Palace, and the relations between the Empress and Countess Goertz are strained ever since the Kaiser declared her *Erlaucht* (Illustrious Ladyship) an eminently beautiful woman.

Jealousy on the one hand and egotism re-enforced by pride on the other, prevent friendly relations between her Majesty and her relatives on the Kaiser's side.

Her Majesty's relations to the women of other reigning families are no more cordial, though less fluctuating, than those to her sister and sister-in-law. Years ago she was intimate with the Queen of Italy, but the betrothal of the Prince of Naples to Helene of Montenegro caused a breach that subsequent *entrevues* failed to heal. The Kaiserin did try, and tried hard, to gain the friendship of the Czarina; but her partisanship for the "fighting Grand Duchess," as Victoria of Hesse-Darmstadt is called in Court circles, undid all her efforts to appear gracious and obliging to the younger and prettier cousin.

In the conjugal imbroglio, Alexandra Feodorovna has supported her brother from the start. The Grand Duchess's continued obstinacy and incompatibility of temper, she thinks, would have ceased long ago if the Kaiserin did not uphold the little spitfire.

Maybe my mistress is guilty of the offence charged; yet it is safe to assume that she acts out of sympathy with the young wife's peculiar position rather than because

she dislikes the Grand Duke, or believes in opposing a husband's authority.

The Emperor hates family ties; he is always at war with his mother, sometimes with Prince Henry and his sisters Charlotte and Sophie, and looks upon the rest of his relatives with supreme indifference, as a big Newfoundland does upon the small fry of the canine race. And as that seemingly good-natured but *au fond* knavish quadruped allows pretty toy dogs to play with him and pull him about, so does the Kaiser engage in familiar intercourse, off and on, with Duchess Calma, with her Highness's children, Duke Günther, and brother-in-law Adolph of Lippe; but as to her Majesty's mother and Princess Feo, he loathes them.

The presumption, so frequently heard, that the imperial couple and Empress Frederick could not agree because of the latter's one-sided love of things English, is on a par with hundreds of inventions dealing with the Prussian Court of to-day,—inventions out of Mother Idleness, sired by Ignorance. As a matter of fact, the widow of the gallant Frederick was not half as prejudiced in favour of England as her enemies like to make out.

I knew Kaiserin Victoria for twenty years and never heard her utter a word of English. She preferred to use German even in her correspondence, and, what is still more remarkable, employed the doomed German script. She patronised German industries, loved German art, and surrounded herself with Germans. The Kaiser, on the other hand, cannot conceal his English proclivities, much as he loves to air Anglophobian views for political reasons. He seizes every opportunity for speaking and writing English, and forces his adjutants and courtiers to learn English, no matter at what age they enter his personal service. *Herr* von Egloffstein was far removed from youth when he became one of our House-marshals three or more years ago, but continues to study his Lindley Murray to this day.

If possible, the Empress is a more enthusiastic believer in everything English than William; the whole faculty of native midwives and nurses (not an inconsiderable

body in our country) looks down upon her Majesty as a traitress to German womanhood for employing English *accoucheuses* and nursery-maids; but she persists, braving the Charybdis of unpopularity. The imperial children learn English first and German afterward. Her Majesty never speaks a word of German with them until they are five years old. When either of the children's birthday occurs during her absence, she sends her congratulations in English. Most of their clothes come from England, and their pony and donkey carts are made in Great Britain. Is it to be wondered at when the children indulge in such remarks as: "It would be queer if these stockings were of fast colour; they are of German manufacture?" Once, when Court-chaplain Frommel admired their hosiery, the Crown Prince and Eitel Fritz expressed themselves in that surprising style.

Taking all in all, it is quite evident that the lack of sympathy between the two Empresses had its origin in other causes than those popularly assigned.

In all these years, Auguste Victoria has never loved, has sometimes fought, and has always feared her mother-in-law. There are people who assert that the similarity of their characters is one of the chief reasons for the strained relations between Kaiserin Frederick and her son. Both are too conscious of their worth and dignity, too pig-headed, too prejudiced, too much wedded to the "no surrender" policy, to come to an understanding, now that their old differences are well-nigh history.

"Knowing both her husband's and her mother-in-law's weaknesses, Auguste Victoria ought to have mediated, or, that failing, ought to have done her part toward bringing about and preserving amicable relations between the Neues Palais and Friedrichshof on her own account," say the true friends of the relatives-at-war. But she did nothing of the kind. In those awful days of June, 1888, when the new Kaiser, attended by the madman Normann, exploited his cruel egotism at his father's deathbed, when he made his mother and his sisters *quasi* prisoners of state until his search for an imaginary secret testament was completed (England cheated a Prussian

Majesty out of an inheritance once,[1] why not again?)—from 9 A.M., on June 15, until after Frederick's funeral—Auguste Victoria renounced her rights of wife and mother altogether; before William's deeds of unprecedented barbarity she relinquished even her womanly feelings.

If ever wife and mother ought to have stood up for another wife and mother; if ever woman ought to have thrown the halo of womanly love around another,—that was the time! What did Auguste Victoria do? She sent expressions of the deepest regret, and said she would come to Friedrichskron as soon as her crape gown was ready.

Meanwhile, William had declared the property rights of all the people in the palace—*his* palace—forfeited for the time being; as the feudal lord of old seized a bondsman's personal estate while the body was yet warm, so had the presence of death—a father's waxen face—no restraining influence over the new master. The late Emperor's, his wife's and daughter's writing-desks, their strong boxes, trinket-boxes, bedrooms, and boudoirs, were submitted to a rigid examination before the owners were allowed access again. And in the midst of the rumpus a four-horse coach brought the new Empress!

Kaiserin Frederick had no patience to hear Auguste Victoria declaim. "Send Brockdorff away," she said curtly. And then the proud woman unbent enough to ask, nay, implore, her daughter-in-law to stop William's ravings. "By all that is holy to you," she is said to have exclaimed, "stop that man from desecrating my home and my noble dead. I have appealed to his love, to his sense of decency, to his manliness. It is your turn now. Talk to him with the authority of a wife and mother. He must listen to you. And unless you expect to be treated by *your* sons as I have been treated by my son during the last two hours,—restrain him, re-establish me as mistress within my own walls, and I will be for ever grateful to you."

[1] The Hanoverian joint heritages, the Princess of Ahlden Allodia, about 1729. Frederick William I., at that time, challenged George II. to the famous duel that never came off.

Auguste Victoria went into the library, and returned after a few moments, her face flushed and trembling. "I can do nothing," she faltered out; "'Willie' is here as Emperor, and I cannot interfere with his official business."

"Then have the goodness to go back to your Marble Palace and play with your children," cried the widowed Empress hotly.

And the hostilities were reopened. In the interval occasioned by the new Kaiserin's reception, William had informed his mother's officials and servants that he was their master now and that they must obey no one's orders but his own. Thereupon the Dowager Empress:

"Whoever refuses to carry out any of my commands promptly and willingly, will be instantly dismissed and forfeits his rights to pension."

Victoria had furnished her Court-marshal with a list of persons who were to be admitted to the house in order that they might have a last look at her dead hero. Only Frederick's personal and political friends were on the list, but William tore it up, and ordered his sentinels to admit all high army officers who called.

Have ever such scenes occurred in the presence of death? The new lord's "drill-tenor" cutting short the impassioned speech of an outraged wife and distracted mother! Entreaties, appeals, threats, on the one side; cold indifference, scorn, sneering reference to the *status quo*, on the other.

There was no peace between the reigning Hohenzollerns and the proud Guelph mother, shorn of power, ever after. A resemblance of familiar intercourse was kept up as long as the Empress Augusta lived, but after her death the Kaiser's enmity to his mother became a matter of political significance. German statesmen trimmed their sails according to its fluctuations, and those of Great Britain followed suit.

The Empress Frederick and Auguste Victoria had one more momentous meeting since that of June 15; namely, in the fall of the same year, when the negotiations for the Dowager Kaiserin's removal from Castle

Friedrichskron were pending. The older woman strenuously opposed her son's claims to the property, first because she herself desired to retain the house where she had lived so long, and, secondly, because she feared William would ruin himself in the possession of this castle, whose vastness and splendour offer particular temptations for establishing a Court out of all proportions to the Kaiser's revenues. However, the "Augustenburger" would not see it in that light. As a matter of fact, she was as eager to branch out *à la* Versailles as her husband. After three months of widowhood, Empress Frederick left Friedrichskron. She was crying bitterly as she went through the parks and halls, taking leave of everything and everybody. "Here I have spent the most beautiful days of my married life, and afterward endured the awfullest hours woman can endure," she remarked to General von Lindequist, then commander of Potsdam. To the officials and servants, each of whom, high and low, she shook by the hand, she said: "If you ever want to see your old mistress again, you must come to Berlin, where I will make you welcome with pleasure. May palsy strike my foot if ever I thrust it over this threshold again."

As was to be expected from a woman of her Majesty's character, she kept her word. Occasional *quasi* enforced visits between their Majesties and Empress Frederick took place on neutral grounds. The Dowager Kaiserin received her son and daughter-in-law in the manor-house of the farm Bornstädt, a mile or so from the Neues Palais, and next day they repaired to the Marble Palace or Stadt Schloss to give her Majesty an opportunity to return the compliment. Empress Frederick was very seldom in Berlin, and had always an excuse ready for declining invitations to official or private festivities held at her son's Court. Even when she lived Under den Linden at Christmas-time, she forewent the pleasure of seeing the children. She had been too sorely wounded to forget and forgive. After the scenes at Frederick's death-bed, she was driven forth from her home, and this insult was quickly followed by another, aimed at her dead husband.

William and Auguste Victoria took possession of Friedrichskron in May, 1889; a few weeks later this name, which Frederick III. had conferred upon the Schloss, was abolished by royal decree and the old, meaningless Neues Palais reinstated. I remember it well. All of a sudden officers of the Court-marshal's office called on the ladies and gentlemen of the Court, demanding us to hand over every scrap of stationery stamped Friedrichskron. The confiscated stuff was burned, and we were left without writing-paper for a full week. Her Majesty herself had to write her letters on ordinary blue-lined sheets, bought in a penny shop, as she would not use the official foolscap.

A third and fourth cause of chagrin to Empress Frederick was the Kaiser's treatment of his brother and sister. Prince Henry was to have had the Villa Carlotta in Sans Souci Park, which is Crown property, for a summer home, but the Kaiser gave the house and beautiful gardens to Baron von Lyncker. Next he turned the Meiningens out of their Thiergarten villa, which Emperor Frederick had rented for his daughter and son-in-law with the understanding that the Minister of the royal house pay the rent as long as the Meiningens cared to remain. William no sooner learned of this arrangement when he repudiated it. "*I* pay the Meiningens' rent? Not for a day, not for an hour," and the landlord was at once notified that, after the expiration of the lease, at the end of three months, he would receive no more money from the royal treasury. The Meiningens have since lived away from Berlin.

Empress Frederick's latest quarrel with her daughter-in-law dates from the summer of 1891, when Auguste Victoria decided to go to Felixstowe with her children and a suite of fifty persons, and, to secure more spending money, authorised Court-marshal von Eulenburg to deprive the servants of their allowance of butter for first breakfast and for supper. The Kaiser's *ménage* never allows butter for second breakfast. Now it happened that the servants transferred from Empress Frederick's Court to that of the present Kaiser and Kaiserin were

long [illegible] first to petition for redress. *Ergo* the cry of Empress Frederick's enemies, that "the Britisher" was at the bottom of the revolt.

"I knew nothing about these petty quarrels," said the Dowager Kaiserin, some time afterward, to Countess Wilhelm Hohenau, "but I certainly think that this latest makeshift was most disgraceful. Depriving a servant of his butter is as bad as selling a dead man's false teeth."

Though the strong-minded English woman was noted for her outspoken criticisms, this remark, aimed directly at Auguste Victoria and coming to her ears in the quickest possible way, created first consternation and later on a demand for reprisals.

And now let us get to the bottom of the enmity between mother and son and between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law.

On April 10, 1888, just one month after the reign of ninety-nine days had begun, Empress Victoria—the official designation "Empress Frederick" was conferred upon her Majesty *after* William's accession—on that day Empress Victoria drove from Castle Charlottenburg to the Berlin Schloss, having previously ordered Prince Bismarck to meet her. Then and there the Kaiserin informed the Chancellor that Frederick had decided not to leave her (in the event of his death) to the tender mercies of her son.

"Cherishing no illusions with respect to William's sense of justice, or to his *chevaleresque* qualities," said her Majesty, "the Emperor orders that seventy-five per cent. of my portion, as well as the dowries of my unmarried daughters and all my daughters' shares in our property, be paid by the Crown treasury now, while the rest is to be held at our disposal, to be paid over the moment my husband dies, and before the new Emperor assumes [illegible] the funds and revenues."

[illegible] was dumfounded.

[illegible] Kaiser's orders, signed and counter- [illegible] And," added the Empress, "his [illegible] ce and all the persons taking

official cognisance of this act to the greatest [illegible] have your word, Prince?"

"You have, your Majesty."

Of this arrangement William never heard a breath until the morning of June 15.

Those who followed the events preceding Bismarck's dismissal will remember that the Chancellor, before submitting to the Kaiser's request for his resignation, went to the Empress Frederick to ask her intercession. At that momentous interview he reminded her Majesty of the service rendered her two years before. But the Empress merely shook her head: "It is *that* which stands for ever between me and my son."

LONDON: PRINTED BY WILL[illegible]

130957

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT TYLER
0000 00118 229 4

DD 229 .F54 1914
Fischer, Henry W. 1856-1932.
The secret history of the
court of Berlin

0000001182294